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The Things That Abide

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The Things That Abide

By
Orrin Leslie Elliott

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Prefatory

The reconstruction of religious belief consequent upon the extraordinary critical and scientific achievements of the nineteenth century is now measurably complete. If in this process there seemed at first only losses, it is now evident how little the things fundamental to religion and the good life have been disturbed. The losses have been really gains, in that they have served to emphasize and deepen the truths that abide. Yet the old order has yielded but slowly, or else, and more particularly in our roving, cosmopolitan West, with a flood-tide which has carried the younger generation quite over into paganism. The sudden intellectual awakening which the university brings intensifies the perils and distresses of transition. To college students problems of religious belief and life are either fresh,

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insistent, and disturbing, or they are brushed aside as obsolete. The discourses here brought together have sought to approach these problems with the frankest recognition of what science and criticism have accomplished, yet always with the endeavor to emphasize the abiding realities of the spiritual life.

It is proper to add that these discourses were not worked out in any connected or progressive series. They have been given in desultory fashion, at considerable intervals of time, and to shifting university audiences. In bringing them together it has seemed best to allow repetitions both of thought and of language, to remain substantially as in the original delivery.

O. L. Elliott.

Stanford University, California,
January 1, 1903.

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The Things That Abide

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The Things That Abide

"And now abideth faith, hope, love — these three."

IN the Life of Tennyson it is told how "one day the poet went off by himself to see an old laborer of ninety, and came back saying, 'He tells me that he is waiting for death and is quite ready. What a sin it would be if anyone were to disturb that old man's faith!' "

A strange reflection surely! Here was contented old age—the fruition of a life of toil and hardship, but lived sincerely, in kindly relations with fellow man, and sustained by an unfaltering trust in the Eternal Goodness. How could such a faith be disturbed? Did Tennyson fear lest the patience and charity of this good man be dissipated, lest his honesty and uprightness be undermined? that there might come to him the temptation to do a mean and base act, and that suddenly, in his ninetieth year, the whole fabric of character built up through the long discipline of pain and

struggle and patient continuance in well-doing might topple to the ground, an unmitigable ruin? This was not Tennyson's thought. Nor was it this other: The faith of this old man is vain, his God is a creation of his own fancy, what he believes is not true; but because it means much to him, because he is happy in his delusion, because his day is done, it would be a shame to let the rough truth break in upon his peaceful repose. It was not that thought. There is no doubt about the final note of Tennyson's song. He was not thinking of anything that would touch one real fact in that old man's life. He was thinking of the surging doubt so characteristic of his time, the resistless beating of the waves which had wrested from their moorings so many peaceful craft. He himself had faced that storm. He thought of the haunting uncertainty, the blackness of despair, the confusion of all the new words and new voices that fill the world, and the long hard fight by which faith is won back. Of all this fierce battle over documents and evidences, of all the recasting of intellectual beliefs forced upon an unwilling theology, not one echo had reached this old laborer. For him there would not be time to find

a way through all this maze. Life and his philosophy of it, the growth in grace and the intellectual conceptions which underlay it, would seem inseparable. In the resulting shock the permanent realities upon which his life had been founded and which he vocalized in that vivid realization of the Good Father and his love and care, might somehow be swept away.

For Tennyson's laborer this seclusion was fitting; for us there can be no such happy isolation. There is not a single intellectual movement of our age that does not converge, sooner or later, at this point of the reality back of time and space and phenomena. There is no doubt that historical criticism has profoundly modified men's notions regarding the Bible narrative and the whole dogmatic structure of historic Christianity. There is no doubt that physics and biology have raised questions about the unseen world which are hard to answer. There is no doubt that great unknown regions hitherto appropriated by Religion, and over which she had thrown the mantle of that inscrutable phrase "the mystery of God," have been explored by physicist and biologist and the mystery rolled back. New and start-

ling questions have been pushed to the front. How much has the plain word of Scripture been overlaid by the subtleties of metaphysical speculation? How much in the plain word of Scripture itself is historically true? What accredits the asserted communications of the Almighty? Is there a God other than the play of energy and the unfolding of life which physics and biology make known? Is there a standard of right and wrong other than the surviving conventions of the race? Cannot life be finally cornered in ganglion cells, and when the brain is dead must not the individual life go out forever?

God came to most of us out of a Book, out of a creed, out of Milton's Paradise Lost, out of a defining process. The Book, the creed, the church spoke an inerrant message of authority. They told all the story of God and man, the glory of creation, the disobedience, the Fall, the just wrath of offended Deity, the doom of humankind, the marvelous Plan of Salvation through the interposition of the Son of God. Oriental imagery everywhere took on the garb of occidental legalism. We could not weigh or question. Whatever Book or Church said might be elucidated,

accounted for, shown to be rational, just, beneficent, by appeal to reason, by analogy to nature, by interpreting experience. But nothing could be hinted at as mistaken or untrue. We could explain, but not challenge. Has God spoken to man? Bring together all Scriptural "Thus-saith-the-Lord's." Has he interfered in the affairs of men? What saith the Scripture narrative? And all that the Bible story tells of him who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" is right and proper—even though it be the drowning of the human race, or the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, or the slaughter of little children, or the stirring up of the Assyrian Kings to enslave Israel, or the putting of a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

By recognizing an ultimate authority in terms of human documents or institutions religion became an exact science, and its practice arbitrary and unquestioning conformity. And this unimpeachable authority it is that historic Christianity so long put in the forefront of its battle line. The distinction between "Christian" and "in-

fidel'' was thus made sharp and clear. Honesty, sincerity, purity,—these were indeed Christian virtues, but in themselves they did not bring their possessor one whit nearer the Kingdom of God. Instead of adorning the character of the ''unconverted'' they only made error more dangerous and damnable. The Christian propagandist came as one dealing with absolute truth regarding man's lost estate and the expiatory decrees of Heaven. The sinner must take into his system an abstract philosophy and then experience its prescribed metaphysical and psychological effects. This process was incited and brought to its conclusion not without acute psychological penetration; and Christian living and the highest type of Christian character came out of the consecration of the will and the faculties to the lofty ideals of the New Testament. But that which seemed so important was the psychological experience and the intellectual assent. Only two classes of persons were conceived of. There were those who confessed their sins, experienced forgiveness, and were received into the visible fold of the Kingdom. There were the outsiders, unregenerate, continuing in their sins, and putting off to

a more convenient season the disagreeable but generally anticipated duty of getting a final adjustment with Heaven through its accredited representatives.

This highly refined metaphysical Christianity stimulated a not less intellectually acute skepticism which challenged its logic, and pointed out the *a priori* improbability of its premises, the lack of proof, the immorality of acts sanctioned by documents and institutions, the absence of miracle from the modern world, the injustice of the prearranged hell, the tastelessness of the prearranged heaven. We should not underestimate the bearing of this battle upon the fortunes of the world, nor the service rendered to mankind by this vigorous reassertion of the primacy of the human reason. Yet it was characteristic of the old skepticism that it did not work in a creative mold. It did not offer a more adequate explanation of the world; it left the world's moral leadership where it found it.

But even while the controversy raged unabated, the tides of human interest began to recede, until at last, in our own day, we have seen the old theology and the old skepticism hopelessly stranded. There

came into being, not as a criticism of theology, but as an emergence of a larger and healthier interest in the material world, a patient, independent, untrammeled, absorbing study of the world's history. The center of intellectual interest shifted from the systematizing of what men must take upon authority to the search for what they could find out for themselves. In the rocks, in river beds, in fossils, in all living organisms from simplest to complex, in customs, habits, and laws, was spelled out the story and the meaning of the world. Of the tremendous structure reared by modern science it is not necessary here to speak. Revolutionary in the domain of its own subject-matter, the spirit it typifies and the method it illustrates have become revolutionary in every domain of thought.

This atmosphere of earnest inquiry has finally brought a pleasant truce to almost all that was strained and shrill in the old religious controversies. The quiet, dissolving force of the genuine spirit of modern research has been wholly soothing. The tone and the temper in which the old dogmatic metaphysics flourished has passed out of the intellectual life forever. Everywhere the advance-guard of theological

thinkers has occupied new positions, and thither the whole army is tending. First of all, there has been brought about a candid re-examination of documents and institutions in the light of historical research and criticism. Little by little there has been a loosening of frozen creed. A grim, petrified Book has been resolved into its original elements of history and poetry, of prophecy and song. Believers and doubters have forgotten their differences in an absorbing inquiry into the meaning of its historic unfolding, its heights and depths, its passionate search for and reliance upon the God of Righteousness. The fundamental questions of God, and duty, and destiny have been considered anew in the light of psychology and biology and sociology and all that has to do with the associative life of man.

And yet all this has not been accomplished without a profound disturbance of the religious life. This modern attitude is so new, so revolutionary, that it is apt to fall upon the youth brought suddenly into its full blaze with tragic effect. The light is not tempered to our blinded eyes, and we see men as trees walking. One by one the old supports are cut away. With the crumbling

of dogmatic structures, all the certainty seems to go out of the religious life. The God which tradition and authority had imbedded in our intellectual consciousness grows dim and dimmer until some day we awake to the startling realization that he has vanished away. The intellect had postulated a God as the ground and order of cosmic unity, but the intellect finally fails to realize him. The appalling silence of the centuries is too much for mere intellect. We spell out the history of a world until it seems complete and all accounted for and discover no force other than the all-encompassing energy, no life that is not finally shut up in a ganglion cell. Yet religion has somehow stood for the best things and determined the moral leadership of the world. And so we find men clinging to the old formulations for their allegorical truth and their suggestive symbolism, and trying to hold on to what is best in life's ideals, to join with churches in their practical endeavors for the betterment of men, and to bear with the hallucinations of the religious mind for the sake of the good citizenship which they accompany. But when it comes to that which the churches put behind all this—the God

about whom they talk familiarly, his purposes, man's dependence upon him, his love and care—they will let it pass as a bold and dizzy use of metaphor which the man of research, who knows what evidence is, will prudently abstain from. And though not much will be said about it, the scientist often understands the religionist to be dealing in a method and a kind of evidence which have been discredited and discarded in every realm of intellectual life.

These negative and materialistic results of evolutionary science are not uncontested. Indeed, no phenomenon of our own time is more marked than the impetus given to theology by its response to the searching test of the scientific spirit. This new spirit in theology, not antagonistic to scientific truth, yet undaunted by it, essays without fear the reconstruction of religious belief. But however confidently we may look to the final result life fares on. Religion cannot wait. Unless religion can make its direct appeal and present its direct evidence to the human heart it cannot be a moving power in the lives of men. Theology and religious belief are concerned with historical data and with the intellectual interpretation of fact and experience. Religion

touches the springs of conduct, and in the flowering of the spiritual life we find the measure of its reality and value. And so, when the brain is weary with the task of finding out what is saved and what is lost in these intellectual upheavals and logical reconstructions, we may turn to the things men live by, to the homes and hearts where the Christ life is emulated. Aspiration, anticipation—are not these the characteristic moods of our age? Uprightness, sincerity, purity, tenderness, helpfulness—are not these its characteristic ideals? Faith, hope, love—these are imperishable realities, the gift of Christianity to a world ready to die. These link man to whatever is eternal and beyond. These bridge the chasm between known and unknown. These do not tell what God is, how he looks, what is his speech; but they hint of likeness, they lead out into the infinite. Believing life cannot come out of syllogisms—only out of the living experience. Other men have agonized and prayed and come to themselves and seen life in its long reaches; they have stated and defined and pointed out. Have we not read their statements? Do we not know the end from the beginning? How close the horizon line

seems! How far it will stretch if we really go forth into the world. Reasoned statements are valuable, and they may point us rightly on the way; but they are not the way. Life has something better for each of us than a mechanical outfit even of completest truth. We have been given the chance to grow, to attain. To start with a reasoned cosmogony, with a self-assured metaphysics, and not aware of its limitations and contradictions—how small an equipment that would be at its best; what a meaningless revelation of God in comparison with that sight of the invisible which bursts upon us from the summits of human experience! The "will of God" can mean nothing to one who has not felt the travail of life. The terms of philosophy, of science, of theology, are mere terms until meaning has been worked into them out of the abundance of human living.

If some one in whom you repose confidence shall say to you: This is an oracle of God, this is a divine message, listen to it and obey it and it will bring you life—you may listen and obey, and if it be an oracle of God and a divine message, the life will come. In some such fashion the message of Jesus has come into the lives of

multitudes of men and women. They have taken the dictum of prophet or priest and faithfully tried to live it. And though we boast much of original investigation this is what we individually must do in a thousand relations of life. We cannot get firsthand knowledge for ourselves, and we can and do trust those who are equipped for this particular task. Only we insist, in religion as elsewhere, that the path of investigation be not blocked. There must always remain the open road to verification, to the removal of incrustations, to the achievement of more accurate results. But when all is done it remains true that the testing of life is the great and final proof. Intellectual processes can correct experience, they can give perspective and proportion, but they can never contradict the truth we have learned by becoming it.

Does not a mother of insight know more of the nature and development of the child than any student can find out? Have not the mothers of the world reached finer results than any modern investigator not armed with mother love? And yet the investigator will proceed as if the mothers had never found out anything. He goes about his task as if no person had ever

observed a child before. He observes, he sifts, he verifies, and finally accumulates a succession of facts from which, with many qualifications, he draws conclusions. Many of these conclusions are what the mothers found out long ago; they could have told him at the start. But it does not therefore follow that his labor has been in vain. Although many of the mother's conclusions have been verified, some have been discredited. All conclusions have been tested. The observations of wise mothers have been separated from those of less wise and less discriminating mothers. There is now some solid structure upon which to build.

Yet in the end the psychologist must take the garnered experiences of motherhood as the choicest material of his study. And in considering the deepest experiences of childhood the insight of the mother is surer than the labored reasoning of the most painstaking investigator. It goes deeper than the reasoner can ever go. In religion, the flashing insight of the prophet, the moral penetration of a Jesus of Nazareth, illumines the unknown as the lamp of patient, stolid investigation can never do. Investigation is the great corrector. It sifts. It enables us to separate the wheat

from the chaff. Without it we shall as soon bow the knee to Baal as to God. But the supreme insight into truth remains with the prophet.

We do not assert the principle of the lever on the authority of Archimedes. He is to be honored as discoverer: we can verify the principle for ourselves. So we may honor St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine and the Nicene Council in so far as their wisdom justifies it. But we cannot settle some difficulty of our own by appealing to what they said. The beauty of a pure life never fades. Its freshness is perennial. It will never lose its power. That is because it is the law of the pure life, its nature, just as it is the nature of the breeze that comes over yonder mountain.

If St. Chrysostom spoke the deep, absolute truth it can be verified in our own experience. But we cannot otherwise take it just because he said it. John Calvin could see and transfix a thought of God which shall remain with us forever. But when he came to build fences to hedge us around he could use only the material his age afforded, and poor, perishable material it proved.

Nor in Scripture can we be taken captive just by a rhetorical figure.. A Scriptural "Thus saith the Lord" is authoritative if it works out divinely in human living—not because of the formula in which it is cast. There is a transient speech and there is a universal speech. Shakespeare lives because he spoke the universal language of mankind. It rings true in every age. It brings its message of power and insight to every generation. If God has spoken to man in a peculiar and authoritative way, and if our Christian Scriptures reflect these personal communications, how shall we find out this fact? Not by looking for a Thus-saith-the-Lord tag, not by yielding our opinion to that of some scribe. If here are the divinest thoughts on record they will work out most divinely in human history.

And so, what Jesus says is no better than what any other teacher says—*unless it is better!* Is Christianity really unwilling to meet this test? Authority has done something, the thumb-screw has done something, blind obedience has done something; but if Christianity had not met this other test it would not have lasted half-way down to the twentieth century. Those who stood near

to Jesus had their hearts and lives touched in a way that seldom stirs within our sluggish blood; and so they were keyed to tremendous effort and devotion. Yet we can speak more confidently than they of the reality and worth of his message: the centuries of testing have not gone for naught. The true apostolic succession is the succession of human lives touched by faith and hope and love—keeping green the tree of divine promise, widening out the moral life of the world.

But some of you will ask as the days go by, May we not still keep these abiding things, and yet see in that which is about us only the manifestation of eternal energy, unknowable power? Can we not trace back step by step every rock and tree and running stream, and the mind of man himself, almost or quite to the primal nebulae, the world-stuff from which everything is evolved, and see no God and Father, and no human mind apart from the bone and fibre which it inhabits? And if, with Mr. Huxley, we "cannot see one shadow or tittle of evidence that the great unknown underlying the phenomena of the universe stands to us in the relation of a Father—loves us and cares for us as Christianity asserts,"

shall we not frankly face the fact at whatever cost? Yes, yes; let us not have any make-believe here. And may we not as frankly recognize the delights of paganism, the serene and peaceful flow of days when the long tension of "seeking after God" is finally over, when we can surrender ourselves to the exquisite sensation of feeling our spiritual faculties dulled by reposeful inactivity? If there were no lovelight in a mother's eyes, if one did not have to stand by the open grave, if faith and hope and love had not transfigured human lives, if Jesus had not lived, who saw life so sanely, who put eternal life in terms of human life, who dared and trusted beyond what any other man had ever dared or trusted! In Jesus were gathered up the moral intuitions of the race. Some things abide as witness of his sway. Love has fulfilled the law. Brotherly kindness has expanded the life of men. The family affections, the homes where Love presides, the innocence of little children, the strength of resolute manhood, the trust of mellowing age, the sense of the presence of God—these are and abide, and these will not let die the spiritual and the divine within us. We *must* seek after God if haply we may feel after him and find

him, though he be not far from every one of us.

If every vestige of this magnificent civilization were to be swept away, and every remembrance of it to perish utterly, it would all be potentially recoverable in the unsubduable spirit of man. One by one the elements would be overcome. Step by step man would find his way back up the long stairs of material progress. And if every religious institution, every rite and form, every Bible and every creed were to sink into the deepest oblivion man would find his God. For God would remain, and the revelation of Him would only await the upward turning of the human spirit. Faith, hope, love,—if there were a God these would be his footprints. So long as these abide there can be no dimming of the fundamental religious consciousness.

The oak of a century falls in the storm. But oak life is not destroyed; the acorn we plant to-day has just as much chance, perhaps more, to reach the century mark. There is a moral fall in our midst. Some man meets his great temptation, and yields; the moral life goes to pieces. But purity, sincerity, righteousness have not ceased to be ideals, nor have they become unattainable.

Out of the framework of the religious life many things have gone, things on which true souls leaned and which were precious to them. To some these losses seem irremediable. It is not really so. The real things remain, and the soul is not less stirred and exercised toward its predetermined destiny.

And life when it is sure of itself must have its grand credo. "I believe in God, the Father Almighty"—perhaps the loftiest flight of the human soul. We may not be as daring; we can at least be as true. And devotion to truth will bring a recognition of the fundamental facts from which that flight was winged. Some flight will be taken—the triumphant note of the triumphing life. Up the ladder of the things that abide, through contact with other lives, through suffering, through endurance, through the deep experiences of the day's work, through faith, through hope, through love, in the footsteps of Jesus, at last we shall scale the heights and there shall burst upon us the unspeakable vision. At last we shall speak it, reverently but with unconquerable assurance—my Lord and my God!

Confession Before Men

Confession Before Men

"Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

FRANKNESS is the highest characteristic of sincerity. And if to frankness there be added courage of rare and enduring quality the noblest type of manhood results. Its directness dissipates the murky odors of diplomatic fencing as the morning sun chases away the night-damps. Its wholesome simplicity has the tonic effect of ozone. We like to know where to find a man. If he has opinions we like to know that he will stand for them, that whether an ally or opponent he can be counted on and allowed for with something like mathematical exactness. The world despises a dough-face; it applauds to the echo the man who has the courage of his convictions. When

a man fails to come out into the open we can only explain it by the weakness of his cause or his own pusillanimity. Certainly we shall put little faith in him who defends his cause or his convictions only in secret. What is any man's loyalty worth if he dare not avow it? Are you a democrat, and yet ashamed to own your creed? Then you are not a democrat, and democracy does well to commit to you neither trust nor responsibility. When the "Round Robin" attempted to break through the red-tape meshes which confined our soldiers to the fever-laden trenches of Cuba, and when the War Department published Colonel Roosevelt's impetuous appeal from Santiago, the political wiseacres held up their hands in horror. A fatal slip for a politcian! True; but whether the people or the politicians control, whether he is politically rewarded or humiliated, frank sincerity cannot hurt a sincere man. To him nothing but insincerity and cowardice can be fatal.

And if this quality of straightforwardness is so important in the general relations of life, how much more vital is it in that which touches all the inner sanctuaries of being. What shall be said of the religious man who hesitates, or is ashamed or afraid

to confess his faith. Can a man be touched in a living way, and be ashamed of the touch? Can a man be healed, and contain his joy? Surely confession is the least that can be asked of him. Surely without this neither intellectual nor spiritual honesty can exist.

In view of this instinctive demand for outspokenness, and of Jesus' ringing insistence, it is not strange that the Church has laid tremendous emphasis upon the confessional. Every avenue of expression has been seized and made to avow the faith. Through genuflections and crossings, auricular confession, recitative litanies and liturgies, family prayers, grace before meat, prayer-meeting and testimony-meeting, catechisms, creeds, and sacraments, the Church has bodied forth its dependence upon, and its intimate relations with, the unseen and eternal ruler of the universe. Particularly in the Non-Conformist and Puritan environment, the more immediate background for most of us, all ordinary expression, conversational and literary, came to be saturated with the phrases of Scripture and with the logic of creeds and catechisms.

That all these expressions are still vital

and active, that they are still bound up with the life and activity of the Christian Church the world over, cannot be gainsaid. Yet if we look outside the conventional church circles and communities into the larger social and intellectual movements of our time, we cannot but be struck with the sharp contrast in the present attitude of men toward all these confessional activities. We have them all, but how much less strenuous the insistence. They are apathetically employed. Speaking broadly, a strange reticence has fallen upon the religious life. The Scriptural flavor has dropped out of conversation, or strikes us as archaic and quaint in the speech of the generation that is passing away. Grace before meat is the exception, not the rule, among those who call themselves Christian. Family prayers are unfamiliar to this generation, being given over to clergymen and others specially elect. Even prayer itself, as a habit, as our fathers knew it, seems well on toward obsolescence. Catechisms are relegated to our intellectual garrets; creeds are merely historical documents. And if one misses baptism, or is absent from the solemn celebration of the Lord's Supper, is this a source of uneasiness, and does he count

himself for that reason hardly to escape damnation?

There are those who regard this state of affairs as most alarming. It is a sign that the religious life is dying out. It marks a fatal degeneracy, a dangerous encroachment of the worldly life. Any forward movement must first galvanize these activities into life. How else can we hope for Christian growth, or even preservation? If family prayers and grace before meat are pushed aside as old-fashioned, if the prayer-meeting and the public testimony are a burden, wherein is the Christian life to have any manifestation? What shall we say, to young people especially, who come from homes which honor and cherish these old things, and whose religious life at first contact with the larger intellectual life of the university, is filled with confusion?

In so far as this confusion and this drying up of the fount of religious expression indicate a real lapse of ideals, a waning of noble purpose and high endeavor, we may well share in this concern. But before we fall into despair, let us give this modern, undemonstrative, tongue-tied, non-conforming Christian a hearing. Is it possible that

these formal modes of confession, handed down from the past, are no longer the touchstones of the religious life? Is there perhaps a reason, not dishonorable, for the silence and the qualm, for the lack of Bible phrasing, for the waning of forms, for the lessening burden of souls which made the religious man's conversation dwell so persistently upon the concerns of the other world? Is it possible that if, instead of mournfully following these dry channels, we cut down below the surface, we shall find the strong, deep currents of the religious life flowing on with undiminished force?

And first, is it not true that confession came to be, in large measure, a stereotyped thing? That which was originally fluid and spontaneous became rigid and fixed—the iteration of certain formulas, the mechanical doing of certain things in certain prescribed ways? Now true religious expression must be free from compulsion. It must be spontaneous. It must not be divorced from the real form and habit of life. Religious expression must be the overbubbling of a life that is real and fruitful, not a galvanic battery charged from without. Confession may be aspiration: if true,

it will be expressed in modesty of spirit. Confession may be experience: if profound, it will not be voluble.

Another reason why these forms of confession have lost their importance is their unreality as expressions of the religious life. The type of piety which impressed itself most strongly upon the religious life of the larger half of the nineteenth century was that morbidly acute psycho-theologic Calvinism which fed the religious emotions chiefly among tombstones and in contemplation of the eternal infelicity of the wicked. Not merely that the other world only was important, but salvation was to be obtained by confessing to a tortuous and intricate metaphysics which crucified and smothered every healthy human emotion. Thus the worthy author of that once famous tract, "The Young Cottager," would gather his class of young girls at the parish house on Saturday afternoons for instruction in the catechism and the Scriptures. "I had not far to look," he says, "for subjects of warning and exhortation suitable to my little flock. I could point to the graves and tell my pupils that, young as they were, none of them were too young to die; and that probably more than half of the bodies

which were buried there were those of children. . . . I used to remind them that the hour was 'coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.' I often availed myself of these opportunities to call to their recollection the more recent deaths of their own relatives." And when one of the more susceptible of these premature saints, little twelve-year-old Jane, was taken sick, how adroitly this same hypnotic sanctimoniousness carried her through all the metaphysical stages of conversion and hastened her on to the grave. With what subtle acuteness was her own self-consciousness aroused and stimulated so that there should be detected and rooted out any shade of the heresy of natural expression!

Fortunately this morbid, gloomy idea of piety has passed away. The religious atmosphere, so heavily charged with miasma, has gradually cleared itself. Thanks to science, thanks to the Church, thanks to the renaissance of healthy human emotion, the religious life has largely regained its robustness. But the flavor of the old

lingers in many of our confessional forms. The notion that the religious person, especially the clergyman, is apart from life in its every-day aspect, that laughter and lightness of touch are inconsistent with the gravity of religion, is one hard to be rid of. You will remember in *Caleb West,* after the accident, how old Bowles's heart sank within him as he gazed upon the white tie of the major, and the suspicion flashed upon his mind that his visitor might be a clergyman and liable any moment to drop down and pray with him. How many of us, I wonder, recall the uneasy feeling in the presence of "the minister," whose habit of miscellaneous praying might at any moment give him an unfair advantage over us!

There is no doubt also that men have confessed to preposterous things. No man at any time hath seen the Father. Our knowledge of God does not come through the physical senses. There is no mathematical formula which comprehends him. There is no chemistry which reveals him. He is not to be weighed in any scales. But man can see beyond these facts and forces. Something comes to him out of the stillness. Imagination, faith, hope, love, point to

things that transcend sense experience. Yet men looking with the eyes of the soul deep into these silent mysteries have not always been able to report correctly what they have seen. Their vision has been partial, defective. They have been too indolent, or too prejudiced, or too ignorant to relate it properly to the facts of the universe. And so God has been reported manlike, whimsical, arbitrary, contradictory. He has been said to do from impulse that which was put into the constitution of the universe. The sinuosities, vagaries, and imperfections of humankind have been read into the divine decrees and pronounced good, since whatever is of God justifies itself.

There is no doubt that the meekness of "The Young Cottager" is the exact opposite of robustness; that the self-conscious piety engendered by its false metaphysics must bring the religious life into disrepute and under deep suspicion with normal men and women. Christianity has been engaged, in our generation, in a mighty effort to shake off these weights. Christianity has had to demonstrate its genuineness, its ability to look you in the eye, its power to separate itself from an unreal metaphysics

and a maudlin psychology and to appeal straight out to common sense in the name of righteousness and true, unselfish living. It has had to supplant the old selfish, self-conscious saving of the soul by the larger concern for individual, social, and national rectitude; the Miltonic theocracy by the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

We are not an emotional people. We do not wear our hearts upon the sleeve. We are too much in earnest, perhaps, to be appealed to by the dramatic side of self-expression. With Anglo-Saxon folk the deep things of life do not readily find expression. The vision that comes to us we may laboriously and perhaps successfully communicate. But what that infinite and eternal relation is, how it sweeps in upon our lives, how it opens to us and we to it, the fusing of our aspirations, our longings, our experiences, this can only be worked out in the quietness and sobriety of the unselfish life. Prophets and poets sometimes touch these heights and depths, and we respond to the touch. But it does not become us to engage in wanton frolic on this holy ground. The deepest experiences cannot be shared; they cannot even be

talked about. If we say much about them, they may be real, but they are not deep; they may stir our emotions and express themselves in passionate ecstasy or despair, but they are not our fibre, not bone of bone and sinew of sinew.

At no point has the readjustment of Christianity to life been more difficult than with reference to prayer. Prayer should be the soul's sincerest expression. Prayer should be the religious man's most constant and intimate habit of mind. Yet in nothing is the modern religious man more reticent. Is it because we should not ask God for trivial things? Is it because, once for all, in the constitution of the universe, things were so ordered that any petition is an impertinence? These questions misconceive the whole significance of prayer. Certainly prayer should not be too familiar. We do not need to tell God many things about ourselves or others. Certainly we must take into account the eternal order of the universe. But it is not the triviality of the things asked for, nor the intimacy assumed, nor the disregard of unchanging law, that repels: it is the immaturity of the spiritual sense. Have we not too often reversed the Scripture statement and thought

of God as made in the image of man? To ask God for what we need is not improper: it will not offend him. We may even ask for rain if the soil needs it: he knoweth that we have need of all these things before we ask. But the asking is not prayer—not even when we add "Thy will be done"—unless the soul has been attuned to the spirit of prayer; and the spirit of prayer is that we shall come into union with him, that we shall see the God-purpose, the majesty of eternal truth, the beauty of holiness, that we be enfolded in his love as the flower is enfolded in the sunshine. Then rain and drought will each be revelations of God's order in the world, and neither will disturb our communion with him.

If we are to pray it must be in the dignity of this conception. Let the heart cry out: to God we may pour forth all the bitter and the sweet. But we must rise to our highest thought of God and walk with him in the heavenly places, not drag him down to the inconsequential, freakish level of our own spiritual confusion. We sometimes seek the prayers of praying people as if there were some great virtue in mere petition piled upon petition. When we set aside days for prayer and ask the whole

world to join us, is there perchance some childish reliance upon the mere machinery of verbal expression, some magic ascribed to the multiplication of phrases? Or do we catch glimpses of what it is to really pray for some great consummation—to go about its accomplishment in the spirit of prayer, consecrated, single-hearted, lifted up by its nobility? The words of ourselves or others may help us to wait on God; in our highest moods they will often hinder. You remember Walt Whitman's delicious revery—

"When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wandered off by myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars."

Long ago was phrased man's impatience with the best attempts to touch with words what the soul sees in the invisible heavens:

"The Lord is in His Holy Temple:
Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Jesus took bread and blessed it and gave it to his disciples. What a world of contention, and pettiness, and mystery has grown up out of this simple and beautiful act! "The tendencies we have towards making mysteries of God's simplicities," writes Mrs. Browning, "are as marked and sure as our missing the actual mystery upon occasion. God's love is the true mystery, and the sacraments are only too simple for us to understand." If we let go the grace before meat, and if the celebration of the Lord's Supper loses its meaning, it is because the simplicity and spontaneousness are gone. And we need not worry over our defection if it is somehow bound up with the resolve that all our lives and acts shall be in His name, not merely the breaking of bread and drinking of wine.

There is no doubt that over-protestation, instead of convincing, leads to suspicion. If confession were always sincere, if performance never lagged far behind, if the pledge to stand up on parade days and be counted on the Lord's side meant unflinching courage on the field of battle, all would be well. But what shall we think of a loyalty that needs ostentatious proclamation once a week to beget confidence in its gen-

uineness? "The lady doth protest too much!" Is it not possible that too much emphasis has been put on the verbal reaffirmation of loyalty to Christ? In the ordinary relations of life we do not require or wish this reiteration. You surprise us by this unwonted insistence. We would like to assume that this deeper life has taken such hold upon you as to become a part of your very fibre. If your daily walk spontaneously evidences this no one will question your loyalty.

Yet one would not speak lightly of prayer-meeting or testimony-meeting; one only questions the emphasis given to the elementary exercise of choosing sides. Let sides be chosen, of course; then exalt the opportunity for high counsels, for the helpful sharing of mistakes and failures and triumphs, for the expression of exalted emotion in worship and praise.

After all, the strain and the stress do not fall at the point of the prayer-meeting or the public testimony. In Tom Brown at Rugby it was a sort of supreme test, the turning-point in the religious life, whether the sensitive boy should kneel down at night and say his prayers before his thoughtless, jeering comrades. Customs

change. We are differently brought up. Our private devotions must be really private. We do not any longer choose to pray before windows open toward Jerusalem. We must really enter into our closet and shut the door. Yet must we face the test of loyalty no less than Daniel must or Tom Brown must. Manliness must show its colors, loyalty must make its confession, no less to-day than ever. The test that goes to the very foundation of things comes on the school-ground, in the class-room, in the seclusion of your own chamber. Religion must tell upon character. And it is how character stands the strain of every-day life that manifests the real confession or denial of Jesus Christ. Whether you are a child of God is not to be shown by nerving yourself to bear testimony in meeting. As students, are you honest in your work, and in your play? Are the helps you seek such as give a deeper insight into your task, or do they enable you to shirk? As men and women, are you set in the path of unpretentious, straight, courageous, clean living, cherishing the simple, true, unselfish things? If religion is a synonym for maudlin sentimentality, if it comes clothed in metaphysical jargon, if its fruit is self-

conscious self-righteousness, to go about the quadrangle inquiring of fellow students regarding the condition of their souls is happily to speak an unknown tongue. We shall never meet another human life with any real recognition except in the realm of outspoken reality. Let any who are puzzled by the mysteries and clashings of creeds and confessions try the simpler ground of living true—each day for its best things.

"When black despair beats down my wings,
And heavenly visions fade away—
Lord, let me bend to common things,
The tasks of every day:

"As when th' aurora is denied,
And blinding blizzards round him beat,
The Samoyad stoops, and takes for guide
The moss beneath his feet."

The prayer-meeting, the Scriptural conversation, the grace before meat—these have been the beautiful garments of faith and hope and love. They are alive with the tenderest experiences of the human heart. Our fathers thought in terms of Scripture; perhaps we are thinking too exclusively in terms of phenomena. Perhaps some day the encrusted formalism will drop off and the old garments be made fitting. At any rate, let us struggle for as

adequate expression, for something as deep, and true, and vital. Let our confession be as real. Are we less earnest, less loyal, less faithful, less brotherly? If not, we need not worry at the silences where our fathers spoke so freely.

And can we then go about our daily living saying little about God, and nothing to Him, and still confess Jesus Christ before men? This much is certain: If we are facing life with frank sincerity, if we are struggling toward faithfulness in duty, sympathy with brother man, appreciation of loveliness, we can no more keep God out of our lives than the bud can refuse to flower at the bidding of sun and dew. To believe in the human heart; in little children; in the sunshine; in love and its regenerating touch; in the life everlastingly loving and true; in the ministry of truth: no man can shut God out of his heart who thus believes. If one does not see that for this cause Jesus Christ was born, that this *is* the revelation of God to us, that on this highest ground of human aspiration Jesus has planted his banner, that his life and his personality have been the rallying-point for nineteen hundred years for the highest moral enthusiasm and the highest moral

purpose of the world—why, it is a pity. Perhaps the creeds and the catechisms, the genuflections and the unreal testimonies, have had their part in obscuring the vision. At any rate, God can wait, and Jesus can wait, for the recognition.

The more we study the life of Jesus the more, I believe, shall we find it the embodiment of this transcendent ideal. Every impulse that moves us toward manly thinking and doing, every breath of sympathy that wafts us into accord with nature and humanity, every lofty vision that presses its way into our hearts—all bring us, whether we will or no, nearer to Jesus Christ, a herald of good tidings, crucified in Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago, who, being dead, yet liveth. Sometime we shall not doubt this. Sometime we shall recognize that he openeth the way. If we are reverent, single-minded, simple-hearted, thirsting for righteousness, we are followers of him. Sometime we shall recognize and own that leadership—not perhaps with shoutings and emotional outbursts, certainly not in the petrified phrases of dead theologies, but without cant or affectation, familiarly though not vulgarly, gladly. In the solemn litanies of the Church, in those

voicings of deep, universal experience in Psalmist and poet, in our own words when words count, in deeds always, we shall join the great swelling chorus of the ages, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

Greater and Lesser Miracles

Greater and Lesser Miracles

"... And greater works than these shall he do."

SOME years ago there was published a novel which attracted special attention because of its treatment of certain phases of religious belief and readjustment. A young clergyman of the Church of England, single-hearted and of winning personality, established for life in a position of great usefulness, stakes his Christianity on the reality of the New Testament miracles. Overborne by a mind keener than his own, which had produced a remarkable book on the History of Testimony, he comes to the startling conclusion that miracles do not happen. In the bewilderment of this conviction the whole foundation of the Christian Church seems swept away. His ministry and his life of service are based on falsehood. And so, after a severe struggle, he leaves the church in which he has been nurtured, surrenders his position and work, and goes up to Lon-

don to find, if he can, a new expression for religion and a new hold on human lives.

For Robert Elsmere this new expression turns out to be the New Testament without its miracles, and this new hold on human lives centers in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. The power of the story, we may note in passing, lies in its faithfulness to the storm and stress of a transition which has disturbed other countries perhaps more deeply than our own, yet a storm and stress which no one has wholly escaped. Does its significance for us lie in that History of Testimony, never written indeed, but for which modern scholarship has collected so many materials and which seems so destructive of the time-honored faith? Or is Robert Elsmere the story of one caught in the toils of a painful transition, who died before the conflict was over, and whose solution is as transitory as the conflict itself? Would so terrible an engine as the History of Testimony be content to destroy merely the miracles of Christianity, and leave the power and personality of Jesus untouched?

At any rate, the miracle age has passed away. Whatever our belief concerning the miracles that have been, whatever our view

of various exceptional phenomena of present occurrence, we are agreed that in all the ordinary affairs of life miracles do not enter. And this is not because the relations of man to the forces about him have changed, nor that he is less responsive to these forces. It is that knowledge has increased, that effects are traced to causes. The mysterious phenomena with which all sentient life was once invested have been reduced to order. Lightning and tempest, comet and eclipse have taken their places among law-obeying events. The unknown is mysterious. The miraculous belongs to the childhood of the race; and the illusions of childhood vanish imperceptibly and harmlessly in the sunshine of growing knowledge. The whole great domain of the miraculous has not shrunk to present proportions because we laboriously disprove its claims. The fairy tales, the ghosts and goblins, the world of legendary heroes disappear in the transition from childhood to manhood. In like manner the whole legendary history of the race, with its gods and heroes and miraculous phenomena, vanishes in the path of intellectual conquest.

And when we turn back over the history

of Christianity, there is no one who will deny that the Church has passed through this childhood age. As Christianity grew and spread into more credulous times, and away from the personality of Jesus, miracles became more and more common as well as more and more fantastic. They were, as Lecky observes, a sort of celestial charity which alleviated the sorrows, healed the diseases, and supplied the wants of the faithful. Demons torturing the saints, angels ministering to them, sacred relics curing the sick, images opening and shutting their eyes—innumerable phenomena like these, well attested, penetrated every part of Christendom, without exciting the smallest astonishment or skepticism. When Europe emerged from the childhood of the middle ages all these miraculous phenomena passed away. The Church, which no longer experienced them, gradually came to regard miracles as a necessary part indeed of God's training of the human race, but belonging to the childhood age and still to be expected only among crude and backward peoples. Belief in the miracles that had been and might still be long remained; but even this belief has yielded to the imperious spirit of the age. For all this

miraculous phenomena the twentieth century instinctively seeks and unhesitatingly accepts the simpler and more natural explanation.

This subsidence of belief, even of interest, in the miraculous is one result of the marvelous intellectual activity of the century that has just closed. Most conspicuous and most fruitful of all its achievements has been that study of natural phenomena, by the method of science, whereby the whole face of nature has been changed. Disregarding received or prevailing theories, yet wasting no time in disputation, the man of science has felt himself dealing with fresh and independent data which when arranged and interpreted would tell their own unimpeachable story. Science, speaking in her own proper person, is authoritative. To every branch of human inquiry the method of science has brought illumination; and with illumination has come readjustment. Old conceptions have given way. Old mysteries have vanished. Order and unity have taken the place of what was chaotic and arbitrary. In the realm of religious belief and theological affirmation the implications of science have been received, sometimes with

joy, in the belief that all truth is one, or recking not what overturnings may take place; sometimes with pain and dismay, in the supposition that the faith once delivered to the saints includes equally the shell in which it is encased, or, recognizing that new wine must be put into new bottles, in fear lest iconoclasm spill the precious wine itself.

The miracles of the Church have vanished. How is this profound change of attitude toward the miraculous to affect the miracle stories of the Bible, and particularly of the New Testament? The counterpart of many of the Bible stories is found in the religions and mythologies of other nations. Is the Bible in a category apart, or are its stories like the other miracle stories? May we apply the same rational tests to the Bible as to the cruder lives of the saints? If we value faith more than knowledge, must we draw back, unwilling to know; or, going through to the end, shall we have shaken off superstition and the miraculous and turned our back upon the faith of the ages? Will knowledge become all sufficient so that we shall look pityingly upon the ignorant and the religious?

Eighteenth-century skepticism, concern-

ing itself with the reasonableness of miracles, was able to show the improbable nature of many miraculous phenomena. But reason made slow headway against evidence; and if the senses can ever be trusted to report anything correctly many miraculous phenomena were established beyond the possibility of overthrow. At least the eighteenth century could not successfully contest this evidence; and so, by a feat of logic, a syllogism was evolved whereby miracles were declared to be *a priori* impossible—hence no examination of evidence was necessary. With the remarkable growth of natural science, a conception of the universe, incompatible with miracle, came to general acceptance. This conception was so large, so ving, so harmonizing, so unifying with regard to all the facts of observation and experience, that men of science lost not merely belief but all interest in the subject of the miraculous. In the first elation of triumph scientific dogmatism affirmed again the impossibility of miracle and contemptuously bundled all evidence out of court. Yet when this theory was applied concretely to a reconstruction of the life of Jesus, as in the

attempts of Strauss and Renan, the result was too grossly improbable. In Robert Elsmere there is a returning realization that *a priori* dicta are unsatisfactory, and that the question, of particular miracles at least, is a question of evidence. The History of Testimony was to subject the evidence for miracles to a closer scrutiny, and to demonstrate how unable humankind is to report correctly and accurately the most common occurrence, and the overwhelming probability of error that would attach to reports of events and phenomena not understood at the time and not written down until many years afterward.

Thus far we have been considering miracles as transcending and controverting the laws of nature, as events which no amount of knowledge could explain because they violate all law. It is this theological and arbitrary conception of miracle which explains much of the long controversy and the tenacity with which the Christian Church has clung to the miracles of the New Testament. In the development of theology the miracles of the New Testament came to be sharply differentiated from the so-called miracles of the Church. Miracles were not to be regarded as the usual and

ordinary accompaniment of Divine favor. "They were very rare and exceptional phenomena, the primary object of which was always to accredit the teacher of some Divine truth that could not otherwise be established." They were an essential part of the Mission of the Son of God. They were needed to establish his position in the Godhead. They were proof of his Divinity. As Son of God, and conscious of his Divine mission, Jesus had all powers. To deny his miracle-working power were to deny the faith outright. To deny miracles were to impeach the integrity of Jesus, to take God out of the world. If miracles must go so must revelation and revealed religion; and Jesus becomes an impostor.

This whole conception of the nature of miracle and its place in the Divine Providence is a refinement of scholastic theology. It is a conception which could grow up only as the natural began to be sharply differentiated from the supernatural—the one under law, the other lawless. It belongs to an age which believes, to quote the author of "God in His World," in a suspended judgment and a postponed heaven —in a God who keeps his place while men keep theirs. It is the triumph of the mili-

tant faith of our own time to have restored belief in the immanence of God: God *in* his world, not separated from it. The other notion came in when the hand of God, the Divine, was not recognized in ordinary things. Men saw God only in the abnormal and mysterious. But science has steadily pushed forward its conception of unvarying law; and the whole phenomena of the universe is again advanced to that height where God was thought to dwell in unapproachable silence, broken only when he overturned a law he had made.

To Christ's contemporaries the wonder-working power was the common possession of all the prophets. Everywhere they recognized the immediate action of God. The unusual and extraordinary did not surprise them; but the key to the use of these powers was given only to the special servants and messengers of Jehovah. That the personality of Jesus was unusual goes without saying. That his power over nature, and over men, exceeded that of those who crowded around, that its expression was sometimes beyond their power to understand, is self-evident. Yet if one will read the New Testament story, having in mind the "evidential" character of its

miracles, he will be surprised at the little stress laid upon them. These incidental accompaniments of his daily round of doing good, these, to his biographers, natural and spontaneous signs and wonders, nowhere are these made to overshadow the deeper message he was trying to impart.

But to the dogmatic age which succeeded all this had a very different meaning. To come into the world in defiance of ordinary physiological laws, to walk upon water, to reappear after death in the physical body —these somehow gave an approximate idea and explanation of one who was transcendent and the Saviour of the world. To come into the world by miracle—this seemed to exalt the babe in Bethlehem and prove his heavenly origin; to us there is nothing more sacred than motherhood in the divinely appointed way, and the divine breathing upon childhood is a ceaseless and uninterrupted process. To walk upon water, and to cast out devils—what could more evidence the Messiahship? To us they would only rank Jesus among the soothsayers: even Beelzebub could cast out devils!

The miracle stories of the New Testa-

ment are different from the cruder miracles of the church because they are different. They belong to a soberer time, to a simpler life. They are imbedded in deep earnestness and sincere worship. They are organic but minor parts of an artless narrative, and no undue emphasis is consciously put upon them. The synoptic writers were not scientists nor gifted with great psychological penetration. If something which the larger truth of our own age will not permit us to receive is inextricably mixed up in the account, we may still feel that the atmosphere out of which it comes is permeated with that illumination we have been so slow to discover—the harmony and union of the natural and the supernatural, the immanence of God. The Gospel narrative has this perfectness: the spirit is wholly attuned to the divine harmonies. No extravagantest fancy of mediæval art ever filled out the significance of the birth in Bethlehem. Dogmatic denial of the Gospel and dogmatic formulation of incarnation are alike in that they coarsely blot out of the picture all that is sweet and heavenly. And so we go back to the simple Gospel story, in its incomparable setting, with no concern as to what

History or Testimony may say, for the spirit and the message are there unchangeable forevermore.

But when it is assumed that the unusual and extraordinary in the New Testament narrative must altogether pass away, that we must reject everything we cannot understand, we shall not necessarily be convinced. This much must be granted: a colder age and sterner climate, out of touch with oriental warmth and imagery, has laid a wholly wrong emphasis upon the miracle stories of the Gospels. Belief in miracle as a contortion, as an assault of the supernatural upon the natural world, inevitably fades as the antagonism between natural and supernatural itself passes away. Everything is not therefore reduced to material terms. The dogmatism of a scientific age is itself giving way. We are not now so sure that every law has been found or that all phenomena will yield to our retorts and crucibles. The appropriate modesty of science, of asking every phenomenon what it has to tell, is being exhibited once more toward phenomena too hastily dismissed with contempt. We are perhaps on the verge of discoveries of permanent value in a realm long given over

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to the charlatan and the impostor. The residuum of truth in the soothsayer's art, the unexplained marvels of sub-conscious activity—some unveiling of the unseen may await the patient unraveling of the future.

Yet when the shock of such possibilities seems too great for the anchor of faith, there are some things we dare affirm. Jesus of Nazareth was no juggler. His powers over nature and above nature, if such they were, were not powers of darkness. They had nothing in common, in spirit or in source, with the spirit-rapping, or table-tipping, or sleight-of-hand, of the modern soothsayer. Jesus had no trick which he took care not to reveal to his disciples. What he did was not done in secret or through incantation. Whatever he did was as spontaneous as the sunlight, as fragrant as the summer dew. Whatever he did was the spontaneous expression of an intrepid simplicity. Jesus exhibited proofs of his Divinity, not in the strangeness and dissimilarity of his birth, not in thaumaturgical feats, not in disregard of the laws of physics or of growth. These are not of his nature, and they would not be revelatory of a God who works by law and by process. He was unusual and transcendent in his

simplicity and spiritual integrity, in the directness of his intuitions, in his sympathy, in his Humanity.

The mysteries of darkness, of incantation, of trance make no open door into the kingdom of God. I do not say it is impossible to find God in such abnormal searchings. But the open door is otherwhere. The revelation which brings hope and healing and the Kingdom is in sunlight, in love, in unselfishness, in the daily doing of a consecrated life. The message from the eternal world is not to be discovered in the curious writings of uncanny hands. It speaks in the heart of man, it is the upspringing of the spirit in deeds of love and truth, it is the still, small voice that urges to gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. In our moments of weakness we agonize for some ocular demonstration of the existence of God, some audible word from out the heavens. If this could be we might well doubt if there were a God. If God could reveal himself thus there would be no explanation for the centuries of silence. There is one only and everlasting communication from God to man—the touch of his nature with ours There is one only and everlasting God-

method. It is the sanest man who is nearest God—not the seventh son of a seventh son, not the Mahatma, not the overstrained ascetic, not the skillful manipulator of thaumaturgical tricks. The pure in heart see God, and there is no other window into the invisible heavens.

Puritanism did not leaven the world and leave its mighty impress upon the Anglo-Saxon race through its hardness and its sombreness. These were its shell and perhaps its necessary environment; but they were also its limitation. It transformed Old England and built the New because the love of God and the simplicity of Christian living shone through the sombreness and lay behind the austerity. The faith once delivered to the saints has not been preserved in purity because in your creed or mine, or any other's, it has been translated into correct intellectual statement; but, if at all, because having sown to the spirit we have reaped of the spirit. The law of gravitation would not be shaken though a History of Testimony should relegate to myth the story of Newton and the apple; no more can such a history strike out anything that is vital in Christianity or in the incomparable records in which it is historically embodied.

Christianity builds on greater works than miracles. It stands or falls by these greater deeds: not more astounding mysteries, not more startling violations of visible law; but the greater works of mercy and peace, the transformation of lives, the heartening of existence, the redemption of the world.

Whether in Cana of Galilee Jesus actually turned water into wine, or whether John accepted a tradition which from some striking incident had taken on miraculous vesture, is a small matter. What is important is that Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul, and the others were touched by the living fire of illimitable love, and were born into newness of life; that down through the ages the spark has run from heart to heart witnessing anew in multitudes of lives under every clime and condition the everlasting verities of the life with God. The greater works have been done, not alone in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Miletus, Corinth, Athens, Rome, but in every land—yea, in our very midst. Questions of New Testament history are for scholars and critics; the reality of the Gospel can be tested here and now.

The outline of the life in Galilee we may

never be able to fill in. What is history and what tradition, what is real and what illusory, are historical questions of extreme difficulty. But the message of Jesus, and the immortal love it revealed, can never be taken away. It is witnessed not merely by the humble men who preserved the records of the New Testament, but by every soul touched by that life from that day to this—by every martyr, by every sweet singer, by every humblest disciple. All that God is we cannot know—

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies;—
> Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,—
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

Wherever the seed of the Great Sower has fallen upon good soil there has sprung up fruit abundantly. There has been much stony soil—many poor harvests. Nations and times have seemed impervious to the good seed. But wherever the soil has been prepared there has sprung up the gracious flowers of charity, of sympathy, of self-forgetfulness—the life of the spirit, the Kingdom of Heaven.

In deepest sorrow there is no comfort in the thought of a God who, if he would,

could stretch out his hand and bring down the mountains upon us. In joyous, fresh life nothing sanctifies joy but that life with God, more demonstrable to-day than ever in book or past experience. The strangeness of miracle throws no light on the daily duty; but the promise of the greater works shall nerve us to confront with unswerving faith the problems of our own land and time. In this sign we conquer. The problem of education, the stewardship of wealth, how that brotherhood and not profit and loss shall be made the basis of the social order—the outlook may seem dark, the problem repellent. But in the promise of the greater works we shall go forth with joy and hope, and upon its efficacy here we may stake the Gospel and our faith in the Christ who promised.

To the devout Hebrew God acted directly in every event of life. The snow and the rain, the harvest, the drought and famine, lightning, earthquake, dreams, visions, the fall of a sparrow—all manifested the pervading government of Jehovah. With little exact knowledge, but exalted imagery, he clothed those unusual and more mysterious events with language adequate to express the might and majesty of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity.

To the tradition-fettered and unimaginative theologian no act was of God unless it was mysterious and abnormal—outside of present or possible human knowledge and experience.

To us has come back the Hebraic vision, along with that exact knowledge which mirrors the unchanging law that reaches from protoplasm to the love of God in human lives. And so we take back the word "miracle" fraught with a greater and grander meaning—grander because of our glimpse of the all-pervading God method; greater, and still greater to come, because of the widening centuries of Christian civilization—the leaven that is transforming the world.

Tempted of God

Tempted of God

"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." . . .

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

"Say not thou, It is through the Lord that I fell away; for thou shalt not do the things that he hateth. Say not thou, It is he that caused me to err; for he hath no need of a sinful man. The Lord hateth every abomination; and they that fear him love it not. He himself made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. If thou wilt, thou shalt keep the commandments; and to perform faithfulness is of thine own good pleasure. He hath set fire and water before thee: thou shalt stretch forth thy hand unto whichsoever thou wilt. Before man is life and death; and whichsoever he liketh it shall be given him. For great is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power, and beholdeth all things; and his eyes are upon them that fear him; and he will take knowledge of every work of man. He hath not commanded any man to be ungodly; and he hath not given any man license to sin."

THE problem of evil is the fourth dimension of speculative philosophy. What the higher geometry is to the mathe-

matician, or perpetual motion to the physicist, such is the existence of evil to the metaphysician. To speculate upon it is splendid mental gymnastics; it toughens the intellectual sinews. To place evil in logical relation to the universe is the task we are forever attempting. Take one intellectual highway, and the calamities of life negative not merely the goodness of God, but his existence. Take another intellectual highway, and the goodness of God not merely counteracts, it annihilates, evil. Take yet another, and life is life because good and evil are indissolubly joined, and like Siamese twins the one cannot live without the other.

So far as what we call evil troubles only the introspective world of the metaphysician, or is resolved in the heavenly harmony of the mystic, we may be content to let it rest in these congenial regions of the mind. But there is another aspect. In the plain path of daily living evil is a grim reality. The individual must face it as a fact—evil propensities in himself, evil tendencies and results in the world, mal-adjustments which must be righted at fearful cost. Good and evil are set before every man, intermingled, yet eternally at war. How shall one con-

duct one's self in the presence of this unescapable fact?

"The end and the beginning vex
His reason, many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.
He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would."

Is there somewhere a harmony in life, a height inaccessible to this strange contradiction, a character-strength and soundness proof against the contagion of evil bacilli?

"Ah, sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt"?

Asceticism has answered, Yes; there is such a harmony. There is a height beyond the reach of evil. There is immunity from this contagion. But the world must be abandoned; otherwise it were an unequal contest. The world is in deadly enmity to God. Therefore leave it to its own self-destruction, and get you apart. On some high mountain, in some cave, on some tall pillar, withdrawn from all contact with the worldly life, face to face with God, in meditation, in prayers and penitential tears, in scourgings, you may escape the

evils without and wear out the evil propensities within.

This is the sublime protest of the Age of Faith against an evil-minded world. Meditation chastens the soul. Prayers and tears, at infinite pain and cost, sweep and garnish the house of heroic souls. Alas, that so seldom any noble, heartsome life comes in, that there is any fruitage of rich endeavor. Often we may fear that subtler and more cunning devils enter in, and that the last state of many an anchorite is worse than the first. At the moment when evil is supposed to be eliminated life sours and shrivels, and all goodness corrodes in helpless inactivity.

As a formula for character building asceticism has passed away forever. Another answer is given. The world is very evil, but there is some good in it. It is not necessary to withdraw from the world: the good may be separated from the evil. Avoiding everything that evil has touched, one may, in fear and trembling, pick an uncertain way and gain at last the good. Worldliness and its deeds must be shunned: What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? If the good things of life are pleasant, suspect them. Dancing and

theatre-going and merrymaking are marks of the worldly life; shun them. Is there abandonment and enjoyment in mere physical life and its activities? Hold it down. Life is short. Eternity overshadows all. There is barely time to flee from the wrath to come. And so, little by little, the soul may be quarantined against the evil that exists, may live in its midst and never touch it.

This is Puritanism with its worst side outward—the severe, narrow-minded, unlovely aspect of that which, in many ways, is so fine and strong. But this man apart, wrapped up in his narrowness, striking his breast and thanking God after the manner of the Pharisee, drawing his skirts as he passes through the street, barricading all approaches from without the fold—this man's answer falls upon deaf ears in these times of ours. The whole spirit of the age is a protest against it.

There is yet another answer. It is the *Zeit Geist* that speaks it. Men are scarcely any longer interested in the process of saving their own souls. It is too small a matter. They want to live. They want to achieve. The universe is moving forward, and the thrill of that movement stirs every

drop of blood. To be a part of it, a part of the propelling force, a contributing element, a unifying center, is more inspiring than any future heaven. Where the battle is hottest, where life is intensest, where temptations are thickest, come sun come cloud, come life come death, there is the place toward which every aspiring soul is impelled. Something is lost in the hothouse. The storms and struggles also cost, but they bring us more. The storm may indeed overturn us; but if by chance we escape, how much stronger to resist the next blast. And by and by, by virtue of storm and stress, through the discipline of trial, how shall we laugh at the fury of the whirlwind! If any good thing shall finally come to us, it will be because we risked something for it, because we did not flinch, because we stood with our comrades.

The ascetic wanders into some lonely mountain, and troubles us no more save with those solemn confidences regarding the perfection he is about to attain. The other-worldly man remains with us, but with fearful, hesitating countenance. If he sees a certain fellow student coming across the quadrangle he turns the other way: the fellow student is a "hard case,"

and he will not be seen in his company. He will have nothing to do with college politics because bad men have contaminated them. He will not lend his support to any athletic contest, for students bet on the game; and he must not encourage gambling. He has brought to the University a soul well saved; please God he will run no risk of failing to keep it so.

This man is a cipher in the University. If he escape being teased to death, he may indeed avoid some pitfalls. But his life is colorless, his positive influence nothing. Not so the robust youth. He may have his misgivings. He may dread the fiery furnace. Yet he will count it all joy when he falls into these manifold temptations. If life is to have any triumph he must win it in just such conditions. He must demonstrate the strength of the wholesome life. If politics are impure he will gird himself to fight the battle of purity. If athletics are steeped in gambling he will be all the more active that a manlier spirit may be given the preëminence.

Shall we then seek temptation? Shall we welcome evil in order that character be given a chance of forming? Shall we, at least, be indifferent to the play of good and evil in the world?

This truth of the sifting power of temptation, this joyous feeling with which we go out to meet it, has come to us in these days with special force. Are we in danger of mistaking the nature of evil? There are not wanting voices to say that the problem of evil has at last been solved, that, strictly speaking, there is no evil. All things have their place in the economy of nature, and what we call evil is a working force definitely building in the evolution of the race. Perhaps the invading flood of biologization has submerged the ancient boundaries between good and evil; perhaps it is only the pardonable exaggeration with which we emphasize the truth newly discovered. At any rate it is maintained that good and evil are much the same; at least they are complementary. As for our vices, we could not spare a single one of them. Were they gone Nature would be deprived of her power of punishment. Natural selection would cease to select, and the universe be reduced to chaos. "There are no saloons in Bellevue," states the catalogue of a Western University; "but," it adds reassuringly, "evil enough to develop moral backbone."

When a young man leaves home, fortified

with a fine sense of right, morally braced, there is small danger that he will fly in the face of that splendid training, of the purity of the home life, of the self-control so well begun. Temptations of these kinds will come. The weaker men and women will sometimes fall under them: sad and pitiful is the wreck! But vigorous, wholesome lives are not thus undermined. Rather will they count it all joy when they fall into these manifold temptations, knowing that the proof of faith worketh patience. It is the sifting process, the purifying fire, the winnowing fan. And the fine nature will respond. But there is a subtler danger. In the transition time, when old intellectual faiths and intellectual standards are thrown into the melting pot, what is to keep old moral standards from the same recasting process? The old landmarks fade out, and the barriers seem to disappear in the subtleties of the new philosophy. There comes the whisper that what seemed evil may after all be good. How can we know unless we taste and test for ourselves? To throw off the shackles of custom and enlarge the boundaries of freedom is a part of our mission. If we are tempted, we are tempted of God.

And there are not wanting those who stand in the midst of the ethical standards and safeguards of the world and say: These things which you love to call fundamental distinctions between right and wrong, which you think are determined by an eternal and ultimate standard, are in reality merely the surviving conventions of the race. They are the standards which other men have made for themselves. Why should they be imposed on you? They have not always been what they now are. They are not the same everywhere. What is right in one land and time is wrong in another. Why should you be bound to observe these irrational conventions? Shall you not demand freedom to follow out your own ethical ideals? The restrictions imposed upon you were made for children. You are grown men and women, and must be trusted to know what is right for yourselves. All these powers and impulses which you possess are God-given; they are meant for your use and pleasure. Your friendships call for this indulgence, your social obligations for that, your appetites for this other. Shall the conventions of a fading civilization—old wives' fables—paralyze your freedom? There is new

light ahead. The spirit of progress beckons you on. You are tempted of God.

Are there any among us who have heard these voices? Happy if the sharp thrust of the apostle rouses our numbed senses before it is too late: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

Why is it that so many fathers and mothers consign their sons and daughters to the university with an anxiety that is almost anguish? They may have doubts about the modern curriculum, sometimes they are foolishly afraid of the rationalizing spirit of intellectual training. These are mere surface matters. Their concern is for those subtler influences of college life, those currents and eddies into which, if the freshman falls, he is almost surely doomed, where shamming and cheating seem marks of intellectual keenness, where dissipation masks as good fellowship, where moral lapse is but an incident in taking life as it comes. If we who are of the University are inclined to be optimistic it is because we believe the tonic influences are stronger; but we cannot be indifferent to the conflict and the danger.

And the danger is intensified by a per-

version of that which has been the chief intellectual distinction of our age—its disinterested judgment, the ability it has won of studying phenomena dispassionately, of seeing things as they are, of judging uninfluenced by emotions, will, and logic which would bend everything to a predetermined result. It is this spirit which, making its way against every kind of obstinate prejudice and preconception, has given us the splendid results of modern science and modern scholarship. But the dispassionate, passive attitude with which science properly endows the observer modern realism transfers to the actor. The metes and bounds of the individual life were fixed generations ago; he is what his ancestors made him. Environment too is as fateful as heredity. And so we have exhibited over and over again the man of weak and impotent will, the helpless victim of the fates, without the power of resistance or recovery because without the sense of personal initiative or responsibility, drifting aimlessly but always down the stream of passion and self-indulgence. Our sympathy is supposed to be bespoken because of the good but ineffective emotions indulged in from time to time, and because the tragedy was

inevitable, his fate determined before his birth.

This sort of fatalism is offered as a soporific for an outraged conscience; and when the conscience is sufficiently drugged there is doubtless a feeling of melancholy distinction in regarding one's self as the plaything of impersonal forces. But while we acknowledge the tremendous force of heredity and the determining power of environment let us reassert the sovereignty of the will. By God's help, by man's help, by his own resolute self-assertion, every man can look his heredity in the face, can triumph over his environment, can make some headway up stream if he will. "If thou wilt thou shalt keep the commandments; and to perform faithfulness is thine own good pleasure."

In this our time of mental readjustment we may question anew the ground of every ethical sanction. But while we throw these intellectual standards into the melting-pot and work out the new molds, we may test our life by that which is back of every ethical standard, and which alone can guide to anything worthier. Does this new freedom emphasize privilege rather than opportunity? Does it whet the appetite for that

which was forbidden? Does it urge to sense gratification? Does it impel us to wound any instinct of affection or friendship? Does it accustom us to a diminished loyalty to our highest ideal? Does it put us out of focus with the purest sentiments that inspire the world? Is it freedom to walk in heavenly places, or to feed among the swine?

Freedom is not exemption from codes, but opportunity to rise above the plane of codes. If freedom does not mean more of tenderness, more of sensitiveness, more of single-heartedness, more of sunshine, it is dearly bought. If life becomes more intricate instead of more transparent, it is no freedom that we should covet. To let go is sometimes necessary; but progress is reaching up and grasping hold; and everything that has meant good in our life is seed for the good harvest that may yet be.

In acts, good and evil are relative terms; in essence they are eternally opposite. What is good to one generation or civilization may be evil to another. This is not the test. The cleavage is forever between the higher and the lower, between the highest that is within our reach and that which is below it. The struggle is on what-

ever the plane of life we have reached. When our vices are ready to disappear, be assured we can spare them without loss. "When the barbarian and the brute dying within us shall be wholly dead," there will still be opportunity for character growth. To one man poverty is a winnowing fan; but there is nothing sacred about poverty that we should labor to keep it from leaving us. It is not the poverty that makes the man; it is the reaction against its bitter pressure. It is the growth within that saves. There is no virtue in evil that we should cherish a certain amount of it in order to develop moral backbone; there *is* virtue in struggle, in resistance, in victory. Temptation does not make character, and he who recklessly throws himself in temptation's way may lose all he hath. We do well to fight evil with all our powers; indeed, we are not half aroused to the need of action; we are all too careless about exposing ourselves and those we love. Everything does not work together for good to those who are but passive spectators in the battle of life. It is the pursuit of right that gives strength, the never-ceasing effort to climb higher. Keyed to this purpose one may brave every temptation

that comes in his way, not like a braggart or a fool, yet counting it all joy because of its connection with the pulsing life of the world. This spirit carries the Salvation Army soldier through the vilest haunts untouched by the all-pervading filth. This armor carries a young man through the storm and stress of youth, makes him a tower of strength to all noble purposes, brings him unscarred through all the temptations that beset his pathway.

To you who are students the gates of life here swing wide open. For you the time has come to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Into a world of mingled good and evil, of splendid mountain heights and abysmal depths, you are to push alone. Friends may watch and pray, but you must act. Go out boldly and make your connection with life where its sweep is mightiest. Be not dismayed that temptations meet you on every hand: they will prove your faith. If life is finally to have any enduring quality, any lasting fibre, any persisting sweetness, it will have been achieved in living and struggling, in overcoming and conquering, through trial, through temptation, through failure that has but held us more steadily to our goal.

But if in the heat of conflict you are tempted to let go any faith, or standard, or principle that has hitherto wrought good in the life of the world, look well to that which offers itself as a substitute. Will you be truer for it? Will the home joys be sweeter? Will memory's pictures be more hallowed? If not, it is but a mad delusion that you are tempted of God. Pray God the madness pass before some awful chasm opens in your headlong path.

From a life truly lived order and unity cannot long be hid. Old creeds, old faiths, old forms of thought must be fused and remolded. But every earnest man may confidently await the reappearing vision:

> "One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

And Browning has defined for us the master spirit, type of the warrior, type of the conqueror:

> "One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake."

Life Worth Living

Life Worth Living

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

THIS paradox of Jesus was his answer to the question "Is life worth living?" It is an answer which the world finds hard to understand. Its unconditional negative is incomprehensible to the optimism of youth. Even where the sharp struggle is on it affronts the self-confidence of those who will gladly risk everything for the prize which life seems to hold out. And to those who suffer shipwreck, who fail in the fight, for whom at last all these infinite hopes and possibilities shrink to the narrowest confines of a sordid world, this "saving of life" by its loss is but the bitterest mockery. Even where self-interest broadens into the interest of humanity the losing of one's life seems a weak and impotent surrender of that prudence which is the highest teaching of experience.

This question of the worthfulness of life

is as old as human existence, yet perennially new to every individual experience. Only once is the answer unchallenged. In the morning time, standing face outward toward the fast-coming day, life is full of radiant promise. The fair vision of quest and achievement lures us on, and in it there is no suspicion of the bitterness which, in the cloudy afternoon, shall poison so many despairing hearts. So infinite are the possibilities, so entrancing the vistas, that every bit of life seems royally worth the living.

> "The year's at the spring,
> And day's at the morn;
> Morning's at seven;
> The hill-side's dew-pearl'd;
> The lark's on the wing;
> The snail's on the thorn;
> God's in His heaven—
> All's right with the world."

Happy if one can keep this fine and courageous optimism to the end of life. But for one clear untrammeled note like this we shall hear many despairing voices. Life is full of storm and stress and disaster. Is not disaster, after all, the larger chance? Is life really progressive? Is there something ultimately worth the fight? Can even the best-conditioned life, when the year's no longer at the spring, justify itself? Or

shall we, even the best favored of us, sink at last from Browning's high optimism into the pit of Byronic cynicism?—

"Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'T is something better not to be."

Let us look at the material basis of living. Here apparently everything has been prepared for man. All the forces of nature do his bidding; all minister to his wants; all await his penetrating and inventive search to render yet greater service. He has but to command and they obey. How much was done by the century just closed to make life more worth the living! What marvels it uncovered! What richness was added to the lives of even the humblest! What were once the costliest luxuries are now the commonest necessities. A Nero could spend a fortune upon a single entertainment—nay, upon a single dish. Yet there were luxuries on the *Fram,* in the icy desolation of Farthest North, that Nero never dreamed of. San Francisco and London are actually nearer in all the interchanges of life than were London and Edinburgh a century ago. Steam and electricity have made all the world neighbors;

and with what ease and rapidity and cheapness do these neighbors now exchange visits and return calls. Compare the foul-smelling streets, the impassable roads, the unsanitary dwellings, the dim-lighted, footpad haunted thoroughfares of Shakespeare's London with the convenient, orderly, healthful urban conditions of our own not over-to-be-praised San Francisco. The men and women who witnessed the beginning of the nineteenth century traveled only on horseback or in the stage-coach. They had never heard of a steamship, a railroad, or a sewing-machine. The favorite treatment among all physicians was blood-letting; anæsthetics and antiseptics were unknown. Think of the industrial, social, and political development of America during these hundred years. What fabulous mines of wealth have been uncovered! What cities have sprung up in a day! What forests and mountains have been subdued; what deserts have been reclaimed; what valleys have been made to yield their hundred and thousand fold return!

Is life, therefore, at last to be pronounced worth the living? With all the primitive hardships and inconveniences removed, with the undoubted richness of

modern life, has content and happiness become the common possession or unquestioned goal of mankind?

First of all, there is the denial of those who are defeated in this material struggle, who have fatally blundered or been overwhelmed by the very conditions of material progress. What an indictment it is that the submerged classes can bring against our favored civilization! The interest of *Looking Backward* did not lie in its fantastic automatons of the twenty-first century, but in its analysis of the mal-adjustments of the nineteenth century. All of these wonderful improvements are real, but they are not for everybody. To the man who has nothing the knowledge of what others possess but heightens his misery. He has more unsatisfied wants. It is more difficult to put himself in the line of satisfaction. Again, our great undertakings, public and private, reek with corruption. What avails it to pull down one boss when the conditions of political life promptly raise up others? They are not individuals so much as types—fungus growths which it is desirable to remove, but whose removal does not cure the disease. With all our achievements and all our progress, it is not the

added conveniences of life so much as the added uncertainties that impress us. Multitudes in our cities fail to find life worth living, though not all confess it through suicide.

But there is a more formidable denial—the protest of those who are successful. "If there were given me to choose," said Lessing, "in the one hand truth and in the other the search for truth, I should take the search for truth." This half truth explains the bitter lament of those whose search is material success and who attain in life all they had set before them. While the quest was on, while youth and health remained, while there was something to do and overcome, they found life worth the living. How stale, flat, and unprofitable achievement turns out to be!

There are some whose desires do not rise above the stomach. Life is the gratification of the animal desires and instincts; a riot of the passions in which the strongest gather up the reins. Such a life is not without allurement. It may seem to stretch a rose-strewn path. Music and mirth sound from its sylvan shades. In the end, however, self-deception is impossible. Life is burned out. There is nothing left, and

the victim needs no one to tell him that this is so.

But life may be keyed to a higher strain —self-indulgence replaced by self-control. A young man confronts life. His capital is health, a clear brain, and educational privileges. Absence of money, influential friends, position, is nothing to him. He is scarcely aware of any handicap. He will win all these. Every good thing in life shall be his for the striving. And so it may. But suppose life has no larger meaning than this. Suppose these external good things become the measure of the value of life, and that to miss them is to fail. In school our youth will find it prudent to stand well with his teachers. He will reason that a brilliant recitation, good manners, a judicious deference to the eccentricities of superiors will stand him in good stead. He will see the vantage-ground of office. He will calculate the value of acquaintance, of patronage, of combination in attaining his ends. His clear head, his far-sighted planning, his skill in manipulation, his ability to put other men under obligation, the power he has of punishing those who thwart him—all these bring him undisputed pre-eminence. Out in the world

this experience, this initial success, give him a fairly clever idea of how to strike the chords of larger success. He knows what individuals can help him, if he only enlist their attention. He studies how he can do some service to those who have the power of helping him, and if he succeeds he will let it be understood, at the proper time, that there is a mutual side to such acquaintanceship.

And he generally succeeds. Barring some slip or unforeseen loss of balance, he takes the place in the social, business, or political world which has been his goal. And is not this the successful adaptation of the individual to his environment? Is not this the ideal which our youth may fairly hold before them? Are not these the winning cards in the world as we know it—the modern world of hard and direful competition? If we move much among our fellows we shall find this ideal not altogether uncommon. To get what we can, to keep what we get—is not this quite within the statute? Not to be a charge upon the community, not to be a defaulter, not to violate the rules of the ring—isn't this about as high an ideal as the practical man has use for? The purely self-seeking man,

if he be really far-sighted from his own point of view, will reach his goal. Sometimes he will fail; sometimes he will succeed only at the sacrifice of his own moderate ideals and the loss of his own scant self-respect. The pity of it is that success so often satisfies; that the blood congeals, and one does not know it; that when the life becomes hard and unfeeling and coarse, one does not mind it. "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

But there is a deeper tragedy in the self-seeking life. The higher senses are not completely drugged; success does not always satisfy. Even where there is no outward catastrophe, there is not less evidence that the zest of living has been lost. What is more pitiable than that groping for the lost chords of healthy human emotion through heaped-up largesses and coarse philanthropies? And what is more hopeless than resurrection from the dead of the larger human life crucified in the service of self.

But such a career, it will be said, no

matter how it turns out, has been short-sighted and a mistake, even from the side of self-interest. The higher and more permanent rewards have been sacrificed for the nearer and more obvious ones. Through some coarseness of nature, or lack of balance, the real resources of life have been neglected. Real self-interest, real success, is not furthered by self-indulgence, nor by a disregard of others. Surely it is now everywhere conceded that the ethical is in the evolutionary line of survival, that in the game of life altruism loads the dice. To really succeed one must retain the respect of his fellows, and this demands the cultivation of those social qualities and those larger relations of life which make for character, and which prepare the way for enjoyment when the end is attained.

To go still further: life is pronounced worth living in so far as pleasure outweighs pain. And in the ultimate balancing of the scales the highest pleasures weigh the more. The highest pleasures are not in the satisfaction of the cruder and coarser wants—not in money, not in position, but in intellectual and esthetic enjoyments, in art and literature, in the refined relations and

intercourse of life. In these is all there is in life—all its quantitative value.

Does pleasure outweigh pain? And is life therefore worth the living? If we interrogate individual lives we shall find by this test that some seem worth living, some not worth living. Taking all human lives together, in the sum, is the total pleasure greater than the total pain; or, is the trend of life, the movement we call progress, such that we may hope to tip the scales that way?

The way in which attainment lags behind desire has always profoundly moved the poet and philosopher, and has given a pessimistic tinge to almost every philosophy of life. The lowest type of this pessimism is that which cries, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Again, it is held that life as life necessarily involves misery. It is impossible to gather the rose without the thorn. The net result of life is loss; and if man could live up to his highest wisdom there would be a final end to all in a sort of premeditated and deliberate world-wide suicide. Or again, since all life is sorrow and pain, the search for pleasure is vain. The negation of desire, the absolute absence

of both pleasure and pain, is the *summum bonum*.

There are many standards and many lines of conduct which seem to those who follow them, for a time at least, to fulfill all the conditions of a life worth living. Our problem is not to be solved by a census of these temporary states of mind. In spite of the vision of the morning we are sometimes content with very little. Life may seem worth the living when it is really stunted and mean. The little that contents us blinds us to what, dissatisfied, were the larger possibility within our reach. The first foothill fills the measure of our aspiration and outlook, and we never climb the heights. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." However merry the brief moment, pessimism stalks in the shadow, and the inevitable tragedy of unfulfillment awaits every self-seeking life.

The point we have reached is this: Human life motived within itself affords no basis for pronouncing it worth living. Does life turn in upon itself? Is there some standard outside of man by which he may be tested? Is there something outside of man, kindred to him, filling his horizon, in whose service he may lose himself and

his small ends, yet find himself a conscious unit in harmony with a progression of eternal significance? Jesus believed in such a possibility. He preached no gospel of renunciation, of immolation, or of extinction. "I am come," he said, "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." "Whosoever will lose his life shall find it." When the small seed of disinterestedness is planted in the human soul there is no limit to the possibilities of growth and destiny.

There is a kind of sleight-of-hand of language by which it is made to appear that the highest ultimate good, or, the highest good of the universe, or, in still other terms, the greatest glory of God, is also the highest pleasure: therefore pleasure is the *summum bonum;* therefore pleasure or happiness is to be directly sought, and attainment makes life worth living. It is easy to lose one's self in a language maze; it is possible to make these terms mean anything we please. But our ideals must be rugged; any pursuit of happiness which softens these is an emanation of the self-seeking life. The higher pleasures are not despicable; surely life will be richer when they are more wide-spread. But to say that

happiness flows from the ideal life is a different thing from saying that happiness is the end to be sought. So, too, the realization of one's self, in the highest ethical meaning of the term, is a noble deduction from the ideal life. It is the flavor of the fruit, but it is not the fruit. Life is an investment of the universe in us. To respond to the universe, to grow into the larger image, through the pain, through the pleasure, in spite of pain, in spite of pleasure, this is to attain the crown of life. "I have been compensated in this cause a million times over," said Garrison of his anti-slavery struggle. "In the darkest hour, in the greatest peril, I have felt just at that moment that it was everything to be in such a cause."

Human life justifies itself by its quality, its perfume, its essential nature, not by its accumulations, its felicities, its preponderance of pleasures over pains. The worth in life is an emanation, a fine and delicately adjusted temper of mind and soul, the unconsidered and unconscious outpouring of an abounding nature. If you analyze it, it is not there. Introspection blights it. The scales cannot weigh it. When you seek to apply the test of self-interest it

vanishes away. What would remain of that ineffable perfume of life if we insist on applying the quantitative tests of material treasures, or happiness, or self-realization. Man was not made for happiness; not even for self-realization. These may be indications along the way. But man was made for the immortal life. "He that giveth a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple shall not lose his reward." We need not deny him happiness, self-realization; but these are not his reward. His reward is in *power,* in widened sympathies and relations. "The profit of every act should be this, that it was right for us to do it."

If, then, life is to be motived from without we shall find its gateway in self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice is not the end of life—only its gateway. Jesus did not emphasize the *losing* but the *finding.* Self-sacrifice does not end in doing everything for others and allowing them to do nothing for you in return. Giving implies a responsive relation. Giving one's life is not indiscriminate charity, nor the conscious going about to dispense good. Says Thoreau, "If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life

. . . for fear that I should get some of his good done to me, some of its virus mingled with my blood. . . . I want the flower and fruit of a man; that some fragrance be wafted over from him to me, and some ripeness flavor our intercourse. His goodness must not be a partial and transitory act, but a constant superfluity which costs him nothing and of which he is unconscious." It is easy enough to throw money to a beggar; a very different thing to give him one tiny uplift toward a better life. Conscious self-sacrifice is giving up instead of giving out.

"For this is Love's nobility,—
Not to scatter bread and gold,
Goods and raiment bought and sold;
But to hold fast his simple sense,
And speak the speech of innocence,
For he that feeds men serveth few;
He serves all who dares be true."

Some student once figured out that in the whole United States there was one college graduate to every three thousand citizens. As it was near Commencement time, he wrote a stirring article for the college paper enlarging upon the mission and responsibilities of those who were about to graduate—each to become the leader of three thousand! The spectacle is indeed

impressive. Yet there is no disappointment more bitter than that of the college graduate who goes forth from *alma mater* filled with the idea of leading three thousand, and who expects to be escorted with banners and trumpets to that commanding position. No, the college diploma confers no leadership, and the three thousand citizens are calmly indifferent. "Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant." To be the servant of three thousand—that is something to stir the blood! And while there may be disappointments and misfits, the opportunity for service is sure to come. "Every hand is wanted in the world that can do a little genuine, sincere work." If we suppose we can run a newspaper or preach sermons when the world is only willing that we shall dig ditches, we had better accept the wise old world's rating and see at least that its ditches are well dug. Plutarch relates that "when Paedaretus lost his election for one of the 'three hundred,' he went away 'rejoicing that there were three hundred better men than himself found in the city.' "

Has some one in mind that proselyting passion for goodness which strips life of its leisure, its fun, its social lubricant? whose

devotees never unbend, who urge to Puritanic strictness, who talk audaciously of remodeling the world, who throw away every good thing to invade the Chinese empire or the heart of Africa? This is not self-sacrifice — primarily. This is youth—glorious, buoyant, believing, courageous youth! Poor would the world be without it. It is often spectacular. It chooses the remote under the impression that the remote is most worth while. It must learn that nothing is quite so hard, nor quite so important, as to do the little duty well and faithfully, at home, in the quiet round of life. Soon enough it will come to the realization that in a world far from perfect the most that any one can do is very little. But not to have the vision of a regenerated humanity, not to see the City of God, not to gaze in exalted vision upon the fair fields and lanes of Utopia, and when life is young and heartsome and strong, not to believe that we can make the world over—that indeed were paralyzing to the good we might have done.

"There's but one thing to sing about,
And poor's the song that does without;
And many a song would not live long
Were it not for the theme that is never worked out."

Sometimes a state of absolute justice and absolute freedom appeals to us as the ideal condition of life. Every man would have what belonged to him. He would be free to make the most of himself. He would have opportunity to measure himself against his fellows, and in so far as he was stronger, more far-sighted, more patient, shrewder, wiser—in short, more adaptable —he would succeed. Those who were feeble, or shortsighted, or disabled, or diseased, would have their measure of opportunity, be finally crowded to the outer rim, and when they could no longer hold on would drop into well-earned oblivion. In a sense we have been moving steadily in this direction. The century just past threw off many of the shackles which impeded this freedom of movement. It is not unreasonable to suppose that both justice and freedom may be meted out with larger liberality. In another sense we are traveling farther and farther from this ideal every year. Man free, man realizing himself, man seeking his own happiness, would bring us at last to an orderly world, a cold, insensible, inhuman Paradise. It is brotherhood which forbids it. An orderly world is desirable. Freedom, justice, indepen-

dence, happiness, self-realization, are desirable, nay, let us hope, indispensable. But take out the helping hand, take out the love that can go down into the deepest depths and out to the farthest rim with healing and rescue, take out the spirit of supreme self-sacrifice—that a man lay down his life for his friends—and life would be as cheerless as the awful solitudes of the moon. That which gives life a meaning, that clothes it with beauty and worthfulness, that sweetens these common tasks, is its anchorage in the larger life of the vast universe. For the individual this is to lose the strain, the pettiness, the jar and discord of self-seeking; to find the repose, the symmetry, the fusion and union with all that is aspiring in earth or heaven. One life truly lived, "under the aspect of eternity," redeems all human life, and in the hubbub of the day's round, with its cares, its disappointments, its strugglings, its triumphs, restores for us faith in the worthfulness of human life—for the individual, for the race, and for the universe.

"God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!"

The Christian Argument

The Christian Argument

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

IT is the fortune of most of us to have inherited the Puritan conscience. We may have strayed far in thought and deed, we may affect the more yielding standards of this cosmopolitan world; yet it is not the same as to those in whose blood the softer strains have long flowed. That which comes so easy to many—little deflections from the strict line of rectitude, different standards for man and woman, good-natured contempt of Sabbath strictness and week-day restraint, unabashed levity in the presence of the deepest experiences of the soul—if we attain unto these, there is still a wrench to even the least of those whose blood carries a single Puritan strain. We may cut loose from every Puritan tradition, we may yield obedience to what we conceive a larger

truth, yet we shall do it with a sense of pain and loss not soon repaired.

The Puritan lived in a darkened age, when the difference between good and evil was but faintly discerned. In the Puritan the saving elements of society gathered themselves together. Puritanism was hard, sombre, distrustful of mirth, narrow-minded. It was also robust. It raised up rectitude and righteousness as landmarks. It associated God, conscience, duty with life. The life was hard-featured, but it was pursued in sanity and soberness. It was downright and earnest, and however the intellect was tripped and tricked the life was transformed. It is the good fortune of our own age, by virtue of this ancestry and this life, to have inherited a body of men and women sound and wholesome in the fundamental sanities of life, religious in deep and true ways, full of faith and hope and love. Yet with all this inheritance, filled with the fire of enthusiasm and purpose, we have fallen upon trying times. The age of faith has given place to the riotous age of the intellect. Whether we will or no we are submerged in an atmosphere of inquiry, of investigation, of testing. The whole boundless uni-

verse is laid open. The experience, the wisdom, the guiding-posts of the past are at our disposal; but we are expected to make the universe our own by conquering it afresh. What fascinating outlooks! No enthusiasm is so buoyant, none more thrilling, than that pure passion for conquest which invests the Knight of Scholarship, whether his quest be merely some intricacy of grammar or the evolution of a race. And no matter what religious experiences life may have hitherto yielded, nor what fortifications theology may have builded, it is inevitable that this quest should embrace those fundamental questions as to the sanctions of morality, the meaning of duty, the nature of religion, the existence of God. It is not that everything held sacred will be questioned: that is no new experience. But with the bewildering rush of new impressions, new facts, and new points of view, the ground will seem to give way beneath the feet. All about you men will be making new syntheses of human life and finding no place in them for the emotions and activities of religion. It would be easy to exaggerate the pressure of this transition time, and to magnify its perils. It does not come to everybody. Some lives unfold as

the flowers do, gradually, imperceptibly, perfectly. When young people are suddenly struck with grave doubt in the presence of the fundamental problems of existence, it were easy to overestimate the depth and importance of this melancholia. Some disturbance is incident to growth, and growing pains, severe though they may be, need not alarm us. Yet something is evidently awry when a thoughtful observer, looking upon our community life, may conclude that "the majority of students have no use for religion."

The intellectual problems of to-day are not the same as in St. Paul's time. Yet the analogy is striking. Paul lived in an age in some respects the most hopeless in recorded history. The disintegrating influences of rapacity, lust, self-indulgence, and malice were working within the mighty empire of Rome. The sense of a moral government was fading from the mind of Greek and Roman alike. Even in Jewry faith had given place to formality. The gods no longer concerned the Greek; yet there were left those who reached out after the larger life, and in philosophy, in art, in science were seeking for self-realization through stoic wisdom. The Jew could not

so easily throw off his vision of the High and Holy One; but his religious fervor was dimmed, and of any new manifestation, like Christianity, he demanded some unmistakable sign of that Divine power which invests the oracles of God. To-day it is the earnestness of men, the Puritan strain, which makes problems of God, conscience, duty. It is a sign of vitality that there are among us so many Jews, so many Greeks—the one despairingly demanding some sign from the unseen world, the other seeking wisdom.

In childhood we necessarily live upon authority. Not having wisdom of our own, we must obey the wisdom of parents, teachers, and rulers. As we grow in knowledge much of this authority falls away: it is never wholly shaken off. As members of families, societies, and states, our will must yield in varied ways to the larger will. No man can compass the whole of intellectual knowledge. We can apply certain tests of reason and comparison, but in the end, in innumerable cases, we willingly and safely rest in authority. We have not time ourselves to study the heavens, but we may become satisfied of the veracity, intelligence, and general accuracy of those

who do study the heavens and announce its laws. In religious matters, we inherit the experiences of the past, and especially the intellectual formulas in which they were cast. In some form or other these experiences, together with the intellectual explanations of them, must be compared with our own experiences and brought to the bar of our own reason.

The authority in religion which this generation inherited conceived of God as far removed from the ordinary phenomena of the world. His existence, his nature, his decrees, his laws and punishments, his plan of salvation and the etiquette of heaven had once for all been duly set forth by men especially inspired and instructed, and God himself had retired from that direct and immediate relation he had once assumed to his chosen people. Still, by petition and process, in response to prayer and service, he could be persuaded to interfere in the affairs of men: using the earthquake, the pestilence, the lightning to do his signal bidding, averting all these by special favor; striking down the wicked by special execution, saving the righteous by special intervention. Spiritual men in all generations have pierced these walls of

scholasticism and strayed into the broad fields and sunshine beyond. No generation has so little excuse as our own for being bound by this mechanical conception of God; yet not one of us, I suppose, has wholly escaped the limitations of this point of view.

At any rate, our modern Jew, come to college halls, finds all these manifestations traced to secondary causes: all nature bound together by the chain of law; back of earthquake the subterranean disturbance; back of lightning stroke the surcharged atmosphere; back of storm and wind the unmistakable barometric conditions; every manifestation of nature and physical life the effect of a cause which itself is but another effect of a still more primary cause. Back, back this God of authority goes until dimly, in the far recesses of the beginnings, where science has not penetrated, he may be allowed to rest as an unknown First Cause. Is it any wonder that our Jew, filled with anthropomorphic images of God, is disturbed and doubting. He will not be cheated by a shadow. If God be driven out of all known phenomena and superseded by this intricate interrelation of natural laws, how can it be

shown that he is within the shadowy beyond the originator and controller of it all? Give us some sign of his power.

Our Greek, on the other hand, frankly accepts the situation. He remembers that the lightning stroke does not turn aside because the good man is in its track. When the prayer of faith seems to have saved some almost shipwrecked crew, he recalls other tempest-tossed ships which went down for all their prayers and tears. The loss of that immortal hope of the ages may or may not be painful. At any rate, to all intents and purposes, the universe runs itself, and has adapted itself out of nothing or next to nothing. Nevertheless it is a wonderful adaptation. The birds do not sing less sweetly because they represent an original variation from an elemental sensitiveness. If any man cares to call this developing principle God, well and good. But the Greek will free himself from religious veiling and see things directly in their simple relations of cause and effect. He will seek wisdom, the knowledge that makes wise, the secrets of nature, the new synthesis of the world. Religion is foolishness, but wisdom may well call for the highest devotion of man.

Strange answer that Paul gave to all that questioning and indifference. Stranger yet, that Christianity has no other answer to the not less eager, perhaps more despairing questioning of to-day. To both Jew and Greek, in the ancient world and now, with sublime irrelevance, Christianity preaches Christ crucified,—to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For this religion which the despair, or the self-confidence, of youth imagines it has no use for, is not a science to explore the physical world in regions where biology has been unable to enter; nor a philosophy which harmonizes the gathered knowledge of the world. Undoubtedly religion is intimately connected with science and with philosophy. Undoubtedly it must accommodate itself to the language of science and of philosophy. But Religion is something different from this. Religion does not contradict knowledge. It has no answer to that last pitiful question of First Cause. Whatever may be tested and tried by weight or measurement or sense experience is the field of science. Religion has no added delicacy of touch which enables it to take up the weights and measures and

microscopes of physical science and reach more accurate results. Nor is it impelled to this search; for if God was ever anywhere present in the phenomena of life, he must be always and everywhere present—"in whom we live and move and have our being."

Of St. Paul's intellectual greatness and dialectical skill we have abundant proof. When he entered the lists to answer directly and philosophically the materialism of the Greek and the skepticism of the Jew, he was no mean debater. To him Christianity satisfied every test of reason. To him, certainly, it lacked none of those signs for which the Jew might reasonably inquire. But Paul could not afford to risk the message of Christianity on a philosophical or theological solution of the problems which Greek and Jew had raised. Logic has no power to touch the springs of life, and no real doubt was ever laid by an appeal to experiences which have no present continuance. Paul could afford to seem a stumbling-block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek because he saw Christianity in far different aspect. It could not be apprehended from the point of view of Jew or Greek. Christianity was something differ-

ent from that which the Greek had rejected, something different from that which the Jew was seeking to prove. Christianity was a life, a principle of action, a relation between God and man. If he could see this life building into the awful seriousness of the Jew, working in and moulding the genuine sincerity and artistic quickness of the Greek, he need not trouble himself about their philosophy. The Jew's question would answer itself. The power of God would be manifested in his own life. The Greek need not be diverted from his noble pursuit of wisdom. His cold and cheerless search needed but the touch of faith, the unifying purpose of the larger life, to reach it up till the Greek himself should see, in its transfigured light, the wisdom of God.

Philosophy is only man's explanation of things. Christian philosophy is only a Christian man's explanation of things. It is colored with all the conceptions of the age which produces it. It is Nicene or anti-Nicene according to the intellectual heredity, training, and associations of those who proposed it. It is now bedded in Ptolemaic astronomy, now in Copernican. In the eighteenth century it will hold to separate

and special creation; in the nineteenth it must follow the great evolutionary cleavage. The readjustment of philosophy, especially of religious philosophy, is always painful. It was so in the sixteenth century, it will be so in the twentieth. But inevitable and painful though it may be, it deals only with the adventitious. The Gospel message is the same whether philosophy be Ptolemaic or Copernican, fiat or evolutionary. Christian philosophy is always changing, and must always change, so long as anything concerning this world of ours remains to be discovered. But the essence of Christianity is unchangeable. And so St. Paul with unerring insight ignores the doubt of the Jew and the unbelief of the Greek, and lays down the Christian programme. Christianity does not assume to solve any of the problems which are as old as human life, except as the unfolding nature grows into the unity, the harmony, the beauty of the divine life. The Bible never anywhere argues the existence of God; Christianity never anywhere presupposes assent to a theology. "Follow me," "Come unto me," "Take up your cross" —these were Christ's test. What gives Christianity its vitality, and what makes

Christian the largest word in the language, is this fundamental call to life and service.

We do not yield allegiance to Jesus because of his authoritative manner of speech. This were to confuse effect with cause. He spoke with sublime authority because life had yielded to him its everlasting meaning. He who searches the Gospels for proof-texts may find support for almost any system. He who sees nothing more in his Bible than historical data and an ethical syllabus has missed its import. Jesus' message was bound up with his personality—because the life was the message. He asserted the sonship. He dared to reach up and claim the high prerogative of Son of God. His nature found no repulse, he stood on this height one with God in purpose and fellowship. What he said seemed of little account; it never occurred to him to write it down. He put himself at the head of no movement. He did not seek the great centers that from their vantage-ground his power and influence might be augmented. What he did was mainly incidental. As he went about he did the god-like things—the simple deeds of service—and spoke the discourse of the spirit. Twelve men became his companions, and

upon them he poured out the wealth of his nature. To them he opened the secrets of life and called them to his height. One failed him; the others responded in some fashion to that inspiring touch. Jesus looked to see the whole world transformed and human life everywhere made divine through this power of love and service. In a way the world has responded. In fair and generous measure a multitude of lives have attained the sonship to which Jesus called them. Yet now, after the lapse of nearly nineteen hundred years, when we measure any of these against the commanding figure of Christ, we do not need any one to tell us why Jesus occupies a unique and undisputed place in the world.

Paul preached Christ crucified because he must turn men's thoughts from philosophy to life. Here was One who shared our common life in common ways of love and service. Yet in that life and service was that which the Jew so despairingly sought—not some ability to wreck the ordinary laws and processes of nature, which the Jew of Galilee and of Stanford seems to think would be proof of Divinity; not some opening of the heavens which should disclose a superhuman God and angels on

the other side of the sky; not the subtleties of an ethical philosophy which arrives by slow gradations at the greatest good of the greatest number—but that larger unity and purpose which reaches up to the Fatherhood of God through the brotherhood of man. To the Greek who cannot believe in God because he knows so much, because he sees that everything which men call God can be resolved into a manifestation of force, because the gods are mere imaginings to account for what cannot be understood, Paul is content to preach this foolishness of one who in life and in death freely gave himself a ransom for many; not caring what name he might be called, if love, and penitence, and forgiveness, and the joy of service bring its regenerating touch; yet confident that, in the end, it would spell out, to the Greek himself, the wisdom and the love of God.

Light and immortality have been brought to light through the Gospel. Immortality came to light, not because Jesus died and then returned from out the grave to resume the old familiar comradeship. Whatever that mysterious and uplifting experience which came to the disciples after Calvary Jesus did not take up again the daily round

of life, nor did he discourse of what he had found beyond the veil. The earthly life was cut off forever, and no curious word was spoken of what goes on in that silent land. Not so could immortality be brought to light. We cannot live, nor behold the light of immortality through the record of any past event. Life is an experience of our own. We live it or we do not have it. Immortality came to light in Jesus through that unerring spiritual instinct, that insight into the eternity of life, which is shared to us through his winsome and overmastering personality. He saw life in its largest meaning, its inter-relation with the unending purpose of God. Every relation of this life had its immortal aspect. He lived the immortal life, and death could be only an incident, however profound or significant.

"God giveth and forgiveth without the asking," just as the rain falls alike upon the just and the unjust. Yet in a very true sense there can be no receiving unless there is first the asking. Asking is the consciousness of need, the necessary quality of receptiveness, the essential condition of receiving. If one does not listen for the Divine voice he surely will not hear

it. The penalty for disuse of organ or power is loss of organ or power. Is the religious life so unreal that environment is of no importance? Nay, environment is of the greatest importance. It is well enough to feel our independence of services, ordinances, formal modes of worship and fellowship. Yet certain it is that the religious life, unless it is exercised, attended by adequate expression, has no more guarantee of continuance than any other attribute. There are those who find in the high converse of poetry, in quiet communion with the great thoughts of the ages, in familiarity with the intimate retreats and secrets of nature, in unselfish pursuit of a noble task, this stimulus to the religious life. Paltry the lot of any who has not felt these high ministrations. Christianity can have no quarrel with any who have walked and talked with God and called him by some other name. There are those to whom the Church seems but the outgrown type of a higher social order. One hears brave words about the intellectual necessity of breaking away from the church whose creed you have outrun, of the common honesty of coming out and showing your colors. When the great historic Church becomes nothing

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but a form of words, an intellectual formula, you may well heed this advice. But what if back of all intellectualisms there is the stirring and fragrant history of a great organization charged with the promulgation of the Kingdom of God and the uplifting of Humanity—an organization whose traditions, whose treasured experiences, whose solemn services and associations, whose splendid loyalty, fit it to be the special guardian and conservor of the religious life! Millions of men have lived, and never two of exactly the same mind. Yet millions have had the same ideals and have looked toward the same heights. How have these millions worked together? By keeping their eyes on the heights. It is no mark of greatness to isolate one's self so completely that it is impossible to join hands with anybody. Occasionally a great soul is so far in advance as to be shrouded in sorrowful loneliness. But this is rarely so. Most solitary souls are so because their eyes are withdrawn from the heights and cast upon the imperfections of men and organizations. They have time to discover creed differences, and to forget the oneness of ideal and outlook. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

Who ever heard of exaltation among the angels over one righteous man turned Presbyterian, or Unitarian, or Catholic, or made over into the semblance of any doctrinal system?

"The fruit of the spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Self-control: against such there is no law."

"Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is Love."

"As Little Children"

"As Little Children"

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

CHRISTMAS time is children's time. We who are not children rejoice that it is so. Every joy in our own life takes a richer coloring from its reflection in the happy faces of little children. Even though we have tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and found it bitter, though disappointment has lost us the zest of life, though ambitions have been thwarted, still some gladness stirs our hearts as we let it all go, for the moment, and enter into that joyous, fresh world where love and trust abide and where sordidness and carking care may not come.

Blessed apotheosis of childhood! Happy

giving, and happier sharing! In the footsteps of a little child we may find our way once more along the briar-grown path of the affections. Hearts become cold may be warmed into life, and aspirations stifled in our strange, grown-up atmosphere, it may be, shall draw breath again. In the wake of childhood's spontaneity we shall take courage to break through conventional barriers and be in truth "kindly affectioned one to another"; and through such renewal love and trust shall not wholly perish from our lives.

But Christmas time is more than children's time. It is more than the celebration of the birth in a manger of one who came to a throne in the uplifted hearts of Christendom. It is more than a brief abdication in favor of children, because the King was once a child, to turn back again when the Christmas days are over, into a world outside of and alien to the child life. In the Christmas celebration a babe is exalted as a babe, and before the cradle mankind finds itself in the presence of a renewing spirit.

What a stretch from the folded life of the little child to the weather-beaten structure of the mature life, from the depen-

dent trust of childhood to the responsibility and initiative of manhood, from the ideal world of the untainted imagination to the grim reality of the battlefield! It is a hard thing to be no longer young; yet youth is forever longing to become a man. It is the heights that beckon him on, and with eagerness he presses forward to find out, to know, to invent, to experience in its fullness the richness and the splendor of achievement. Glorious indeed is the human life divine unfolding toward the light, keyed to lofty purpose. How the glory dims when we blindly put away from us the unapproachable grace of childlikeness! Ah, that we should so often look out into the world and into our own hearts and see the lofty heights obscured! Somehow the simplicity and the trust have vanished; somehow the heart has hardened. So recklessly we deal with our wonderful inheritance, so insensibly the strength and beauty and completeness of the ideal life fade away, that we will not admit any volition. It is just a part of our sophistication, we insist, just the normal price for firmness of texture, wisdom, the necessary knowledge of good and evil, the substitution of realities for dreams. The youth of

promise and high purpose must wake up at last to a world of jarring interests, rivalries, unequal competitions. The things which expanded his soul and fired his ambitions are not the prizes for which men strive. Their pursuit does not seem to offer any secure footing in a practical world. In politics, in business, in social life the ideal is folded carefully away, and scheming shrewdness and conformity fix the high-water mark of practicability.

In religion the faded metaphors are laid aside. If the religious impulse persists God is sought through some intellectual-emotional experience; but when God has thus been found we need to be persistently told so, lest it should never be guessed through any effect upon conduct. Or, with the attainment of erudition, religion is taken out of the innocent, simple-mindedness of the child trust and given over to daring speculation. Far out beyond the stars, outside the unsubstantial figments of time and space, in the ultimate immensities, the mind tries somehow to grasp a God who is the Universal Soul of things, the one only essence, of which we are a part. Or, in our blind numbness we seek him in some disordered fancy of an overstrained ner-

vous system. We think to apprehend him through some abnormal acuteness of the physical senses, and try to satisfy the dull longing of an unfed heart by the unexplained marvels of sub-conscious activity.

And so we find the problem of God insoluble. With all our manifold demonstrations the question, Does God exist? is constantly recurring. The prayer, "O God, if there be a God—save my soul, if I have a soul," is, after all, about as high as the unaided intellect ever reaches. The God of our thought conception—Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient—makes no speech in our English tongue, we do not meet him in the street, nor can we see anything with these eyes of ours despite our utmost straining.

"The light that never was on land or sea" is the constant illumination of childhood. Before the veil is lifted we all live in the glowing land of promise where everything is fair and beautiful. The light may fade; but when child life is renewed in the home something of the old enchantment instinctively returns. For ourselves, we may aver, the glorious vision has passed —for us the prose of life, the commonplace, whether it pass for success or defeat—yet

all we have missed, all we meant to become and once believed we should attain—all this shall come rushing back upon us as somehow possible in our children—if only youth could be kept! If only we could guard the children, if only something which is unspeakably precious be not lost in the passage over to manhood, the world shall be transformed. In childhood the whole world is renewed. Judge any man by what he is in his home and among children. Moral degradation has no plainer mark than a failure to respect the innocence and the trustfulness of childhood. And there is no surer sign of the pure heart than instinctive reverence for childhood. Children do not come to every home; but it is inconceivable that there should be a home so selfish as not to want child life in it. "To meet eyes which trust us without question, to receive caresses which are not measured by our worthiness but are the spontaneous fruit of a love which seeks no proof of our merit, cannot be a light matter to any man. These are a father's guerdon and repay many an hour of patient self-denial. If a man or woman finds the greed and false effort of his or her world are infecting the spirit with the lowering in-

fluences they exert, God has left no such restraining power in a sinful world as the fear to injure a child or lose its love." Nothing more emphasizes the transitoriness and artificiality of this set-apart life of students, in barracks and boarding clubs, than the absence of the home sanctities and of the hallowing presence of little children. What utter loneliness there may be in a crowd; and what tempting spirits come to a house thus suddenly swept and garnished! But think you there is no saving quality in the memory of these things? He will not go far wrong in whose heart are enshrined the pure affections of a home kept sweet and warm-hearted by the child life in it.

To childhood we must turn back for the law of spiritual growth. Ignorance does not in itself prevent, knowledge does not in itself help or hinder spiritual growth: to reach out and take hold; to put on; to earn faith by being faithful; to experience what love is by loving; there is no other way. To turn from plain, wholesome living, in the sunshine, just doing the next duty, just leading the simple, strenuous life—to turn from this to abstract ratiocination, or to painful

groping in the sub-conscious, is to turn from warmth and light to the dank cellar where men like plants shall merely spindle out in fantastic and unsubstantial shapes. Some strange and marvelous harvest there may be, the rightful spoil of erudition and investigation, but not here the meeting-place of earth and heaven.

To the impatient youth hurrying away from childhood, to the finally disillusioned man, the trust of childhood seems a blind trust, just a shutting of the eyes, the exhibition of unlimited credulity. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There is no shutting of the eyes in childhood. The trust of childhood is the undeceived trust: "The soft, deep heart of the little child that, having nothing, asketh for all things, that hath no care, no distress, no solicitude, and expecteth only love." The looking up and asking is natural. The trust is begotten by nothing but the receiving. All the sweet trust of childhood may be destroyed by one thoughtless deception. But so long as the child can say My Father, and receive the answering confidence, so long as mother-love beats in true response to child need, so long does trust remain to mold the character in all loveliness and excellence.

Childhood possesses neither knowledge nor erudition. Childhood can have no sense of proportion or relation among the intricate facts of the universe. But the child-spirit and the child-faith are the spirit and the faith which preserve the symmetry of life in the midst of all the distractions and disorders of the world. Forever the relations of the home typify the relation of man to all that is kindred to him in the universe of God.

Yet we know that the God and Father of us all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all, cannot be limited by time and space. The very highest attributes of man —consciousness and personality—can only faintly symbolize the like possession of him who is the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, Creator and Preserver of Mankind. And we know there can be no literal truth in giving him form and locality, and thinking of a great room in Heaven, and a throne, and all of us gathered around it. Then must we cease to think of God as Father and we as children to be gathered sometime into his presence? No; here is our highest thought of him. Here, by means of this symbolism, where intellect and reason stand at bay, we pass through

to ultimate reality. Just here, in the simple, trustful attitude of the little child, just here, by pressing home the deepest relations of earth, just here, in this symbolism, we find that order and unity and meaning, that harmony and beauty, that unutterable love whereby we instinctively cry Abba, Father! and doubt not of the response.

What is the strongest characteristic of the wisest man? Not his craft, not his logic, not his towering knowledge. It is his directness, his simplicity, his childlikeness. O the men who live behind masks, to whom diplomacy and duplicity seem so great weapons, who flatter, and cajole, and contrive! How far are they from the real heart of things, from real strength, from real wisdom! And how, after all, the world loves and appreciates outspokenness!

And so the lesson is and the sweet message is, that we can become as little children in things of the spirit. Youth can be renewed in our sluggish blood. The hardened heart may be softened. The zest of life, the simplicity and trust, these were not forever lost as we climbed the sordid years this side the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. *Except*

we be converted and become as little children? Blessed, thrice blessed, are we that we *can* become as little children, that the tortuous windings may be unwound, that the simplicities and the trust are real, that the spiritual life is just this life touched with illumination, that something that belongs to childhood may perennially freshen our days, that in the real things of life we may never grow old.

And so to this babe in the manger Humanity turns and sees reflected the vision and the fullness of God. The Christmas vision is the revelation of permanent truth. The things eternally truest in our own lives cannot be less true anywhere in the vast eternity of God. Jesus took little children in his arms and blessed them and made them the everlasting type of discipleship. How long a perverse world stumbled over the plainest of truths! But childhood is coming to its own; its benediction is that the mood of despairing doubt and homelessness shall give place to understanding trust and the peace of the reunited home —not less real that it passeth all understanding.

"Like as a Father"

"Like as a Father"

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

LIFE is our adventure into the unknown. It is the supreme quest; and no travelers' tales which reach us can dull the keen edge of our own experiences or discoveries. On this voyaging we can go but a little way before meeting with contradictions. We shall find joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, triumphs and despairs, heights and depths. In this encounter with the world of experience we are not mere inert passengers. It is a real encounter; and how we take it, how we react upon it, how we direct it, is of vast importance. If we were passive spectators, and if the spectacle would be the same whatever our efforts and conduct, if a blind fate were driving us toward a predetermined end, there might be interest in the voyaging and curiosity about the end, but there would be no sustained enthusiasm and no giving of thanks. But if there is a port at which we shall

arrive by virtue of our own effort and striving in a world fundamentally good, a "far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves," then nothing shall subdue the courage and the exhilaration with which we turn to meet whatever befall us.

Is the world fundamentally good, or bad? A part of the evidence is our own individual experience—what happens to us; a part is the experience of the race. But there is no final answer without a synthesis of that which lies behind time and space and every outpost of the human mind. There is no reflecting mind which does not try to make this synthesis, to construct, in terms of experience, a symbol of that ultimate reality which is at the heart of the universe and which we have called God.

The line of our own spiritual descent is through the race which has given to the world the loftiest conception of God and of the destiny of man. Yet some of the most terrible conceptions of God are found in the Bible. Those which reflect merely a rudimentary stage of civilization, in which cunning and cruelty suggest no inconsistency, we need not dwell upon. Even in

them the spiritual genius of the Hebrew people is not wholly wanting. God is always the defender of his chosen people. Against their enemies he will move with swift and terrible fury. For the chosen nation there is deliverance and exaltation, yet through the discipline of trial and humiliation. Even when the passion for righteousness has become dominant he is the great and terrible God, smiting wickedness, tearing down idols, overturning kingdoms with his breath. Prophetic language is symbolic and figurative. Nevertheless prophecy is a reflective interpretation of the world of experience thrown against the unconquerable ideal of the Hebrew race.

But while the prophets cling to their great ideal and transmit it unimpaired, the heritage of all succeeding peoples, the Hebrew race can grasp it only fitfully and is again and again overwhelmed by the insistent contradictions of experience. It finds a world of warring forces, a world of bitter contrasts, a world of suffering. The wicked prosper, the innocent suffer, righteousness must stand aside. The days of a man are "few and full of trouble."

"Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break."

What kind of a world is this,—the world of breaking hearts? In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the lightning stroke may come and leave behind only the long, long ache of bereavement.

"Why is light given to a man whose way is hid,
And whom God hath hedged in?
I am not at ease, neither am I quiet,
Neither have I rest: but trouble cometh."

Is it a good world which can write such a commentary on human life?

From this prison-house of despair the Hebrew mind could climb to one unassailable height. God might be angry or jealous or unpropitiated; evil passions and sorrow might for a time hold sway. But this was no eternal order: the Vindicator would appear. Restoration was merely delayed; the Chosen People would yet be exalted. Modern pessimism has sunk into a deeper despair. There is no Vindicator. Nature has her genial moods, her lovable aspects. But she is the stern and unbending law of sequence; she vindicates only her own order. The reality outside of man does not regard man; it is utterly indifferent to him. Nature is beneficent if we go her way; within that range we may be light-hearted and love life and feel it good. But

if we oppose her she strikes without fear and without remorse. Nothing interferes with nature, for there is nothing *to* interfere with immutable law. God—that is, the mechanism of the universe—is concerned with his own affairs. "Nature red in tooth and claw with ravine," "the great glad earth—glad as if no child had ever died" —this is our outward environment. And if one flees in terror from this aspect of the outer world to seek renewal of life in the commonwealth of hearts, one is met by the no less terrible isolation of the individual. We meet and touch in the surface things, and in the depths of the soul are a million miles apart. How much there is we cannot share! How much there is, both in our joy and our sorrow, of which the world neither knows nor cares!

"She came to us in storm and snow—
The little one we held so dear—
And all the world was full of woe,
And war and famine plagued the year;
And ships were wrecked, and fields were drowned,
And thousands died for lack of bread;
In such a troubled time we found
That sweet mouth to be kissed and fed.

"But oh, we were a happy pair,
Through all the war and want and woe;
Though not a heart appeared to care,
And no one even seemed to know.

"She left us in the blithe increase
Of glowing fruit and ripening corn,
When all the nations were at peace,
And plenty held a brimming horn—
When we at last were well to do,
And life was sweet and earth was gay;
In that glad time of cloudless blue
Our little darling passed away.

"And oh, we were a wretched pair
In all the gladness and the glow;
And not a heart appeared to care,
And no one even seemed to know."

I know there is a philosophical reaction from the despair which seems to follow the pessimistic view of the universe. Things are not so bad after all. There is a bright side, and one may train himself to look mainly on that. In the allotted threescore and ten years much may be achieved. No matter if it makes no difference a cycle or a million years hence: we take life as we find it, with a fair chance at its prizes. Nature may be coaxed and driven to do our bidding, if only we try patiently to learn her ways; the fellowship and emulation of kindred minds will sustain and cheer us along the toilsome ascent. There will be pain and pleasure, but in seventy years we may hope to triumph over the pain and achieve contentment.

Let us believe indeed that all this is possible. But is it in this mood that we tune

our Thanksgiving anthem? Because there is a little bending of the scales in favor of the brighter side of life? because in the twelvemonth past, or in the twelvemonth to come, our gains have been, or promise to be, greater than our losses?

It was the triumph of the loftiest spiritual insight of the Hebrew people to resolve these grim aspects of the universe. To them God was lawgiver, judge, vindicator. But their passionate faith in the supremacy of righteousness led them on to the vision of God as a Father—stern indeed he was to them, unbending, terribly severe with disobedience, but kindred and not alien. He cared for his people. "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

In Jesus this feeling of the Fatherhood of God had a new and marvelous blossoming. What Jesus apprehended amounted to a discovery of God, a revelation. He was no inert observer. He saw the sad contrasts. He felt some of the bitterness. In the quiet years at the carpenter's bench, in the lonely days in the desert, he had his doubts and struggles. But of these no trace appears when he stands out the great Teacher of mankind. He adventured his

life on the principle that it is a good world —his Father's world. He talked familiarly about God, and yet he pretended to no occult knowledge of Him. He had no ways of knowing Him which you may not have. If he had been asked to prove the existence of God he could have offered no better logical demonstration than have hundreds of others, and probably with no better success in convincing the unwilling mind. What he discovered was a synthesis of life which explained it, which resolved its contradictory elements, which brought order out of chaos, which enthroned Love in the heavens. This synthesis was not a theory spun out in his head. He beheld the lilies of the field. He saw affection working in the world. He saw what became of despair in the crucible of faith and hope and love. He could see the laughter coming through the tears. He could see the joy encompassing the sorrow. Love will heal the wounds; love will transform the evil. It is so because it is God's world, and this is His expression of Himself.

How did Jesus demonstrate this synthesis? Only by living it and giving his life for it. It will never be demonstrated in any other way. We who live it so im-

perfectly may see glimpses of what it is in its perfectness. It is a good world because human affections are the glow of it. It is a good world because evil, no matter how prevalent, is alien: in the scale of values evil weighs nothing. It is a good world because character is supreme. No one may doubt that the spiritual is higher than the animal, or that unselfishness is more comely than self-interest. "Never morning wore to evening, but some heart did break"—but it is not the broken heart that is significant. It is the healing that is significant—the healing that goes out from a good world. "To bind up the broken-hearted"! O the mystery of pain—but the greater mystery of its absorption! It is not Time that heals: it is the good world—its warmth and tenderness, its abundant life that faileth not. To the woman bearing the dead babe Buddha could only say, "Look around you and see how many others suffer a like affliction." But healing comes only as one enters into the gladness which, after all, fills the world. It is not cruelty or indifference that "the great, glad earth is glad as if no child had ever died." It is the pledge that after all, and in spite of all, life is livable and joyous. The sunshine will fall

upon us till we cannot but heed. When the first dull feeling of surprise has worn away we shall rejoice that "the great, glad earth" could not be changed or swerved aside by our little griefs. Because it is a world loving and fine the clouds will melt away. The good world's elixir is its unbounded cheerfulness, the bursting of leaf and flower, the flooding sunshine, the imperturbable calm of loving hearts.

"I too have come through wintry terrors,—yea,
Through tempest and through cataclysm of soul
Have come, and am delivered. Me the Spring,
Me also, dimly with new life hath touched,
And with regenerate hope, the salt of life;
And I would dedicate these thankful tears
To whatsoever Power beneficent,
Veiled though his countenance, undivulged his thought,
Hath led me from the haunted darkness forth
Into the gracious air and vernal morn,
And suffers me to know my spirit a note
Of this great chorus, one with bird and stream
And voiceful mountain,—nay, a string, how jarred
And all but broken! of that lyre of life
Whereon himself, the master harp-player,
Resolving all its mortal dissonance
To one immortal and most perfect strain,
Harps without pause, building with song the world."

It is this world of song that we are trying to put into our Thanksgiving this morning. Shall we do it, for our country, by picking out her triumphs and not remem-

bering her defeats? for ourselves, by dwelling only on the pleasure and forgetting the pain? Or shall we rise to some heroic height and offer thanksgiving for all that has befallen us, the evil and the good, the joy and the sorrow? Rather let us be thankful that joy remaineth: not that there is an alternation of joy and sorrow, but that joy is permanent. After pain there cometh joy—not in alternation, but as the unsuppressible reality.

The isolation is only seeming. A world in which goodness may root and send forth its undying fragrance, in which the cup of cold water is always passing, out of which the barbarian and the brute are dying, is not a homeless world. It is our Father's house. If we do not talk so freely and frankly about it as Jesus did perhaps it is because the beautiful symbolism has been covered over by an unlovely literalism. It is days like this when we break through the crust. In the warmth of human affections, in the joy of that forward look which lifts us above every contradiction, we may speak the gratitude of children over whom bends both the seen and the unseen "like as a Father."

The Life Eternal

The Life Eternal

"And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and mother. And he said, All these things have I observed from my youth up. And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

THIS young ruler did not come to Jesus because he lacked anything. His lines had fallen in pleasant places. He had great possessions. He kept the commandments. There was in his life the thrill of being looked up to and obeyed; he could feel that he was meeting, in some adequate way, the responsibilities and opportunities that had come to him. Jesus looking upon him loved him.

There was one thing that troubled him. This pleasant, satisfying life must come to

an end. Somewhere Death stood across his path, the most insistent fact in life. But beyond death there was the possibility of continued life—life restored, eternal life. How could that eternal life be assured? Let the conditions be made out, and he believed himself ready to meet whatever of tithes, of almsgiving, of fastings and prayer they might imply. There was no theological legalism he would not undertake to satisfy if only there could be assurance of the continued life of unalloyed richness and promise. Jesus was a Master in Israel. Would he have aught to suggest, any omitted action to call to mind, which when performed, would render that future more certain? "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

When the answer was given him he turned away sorrowful. If Jesus spoke wisely he had put his finger upon some flaw in this young man's thought of life. Possibly the young man looked only for an assurance that he had done all that the law required, and that his parcel of eternal life was carefully labeled and laid away to be called for at heaven's gate. At any rate, he had not thought of any remodeling of this life. He was disappointed not to re-

ceive commendation for his modest self-abasement, his solicitous care to leave nothing undone. His pride and self-esteem were hurt by a reply which gave so little weight to an upright life, to the punctilious attention to every religious command and convention. What value would there be to a life continued, made eternal, out of which had been taken all that rendered it attractive? a continuation obtained at such cost that this present life must be despised, counted as nothing, given up?

How completely this interpretation of Jesus' attitude toward this present world came to be assumed by historic Christianity; and with what elaboration of detail and emphasis it has dwelt upon the contrast between this life and the life eternal. As the present life was emptied, as it seemed to become more worthless, the future life was exalted. To the theological generations that succeeded it seemed that Jesus merely asked this young ruler to give up the brief, hurtful pleasures of a worldly life for the sake of everlasting joy and felicity. Nor was it merely the prize of eternal life which urged to renunciation. Existence could not cease. Over against Heaven was its counterpart Hell. The one

was to be bargained for; escape from the other to be purchased. Dangers beset the Christian on every hand. This world was the devil's world; the pleasures of this present life his most dangerous weapons. Everything of earthly value must be renounced. The life eternal was as different as possible from this present life. Here there should be tears, struggles, weariness, renunciation; there eternal joy and felicity. Here was bitterness, defeat, disease, death; there sweetness, triumph, untroubled life.

It is not necessary to recall all the ways in which the imagination of man has played around this mystery of the life beyond death. The strange theologies which have come out of this supposed teaching of Jesus present us a world busy with the desperateness, the despair, of doomed men. Men of exalted religious emotion fled from the natural life of the world as from a pesthouse. In dens and caves, in lonely hermitages, in the rigid seclusion and rigid discipline of the monastery they sought to escape an evil world, wear out the despised and degraded body, and win the prize of eternal life held out beyond the grave. Men of philosophic mind, speculating upon the divine nature, worked into the simple mes-

sage of Jesus the intricate subtleties of Greek metaphysics and superimposed upon Christianity the lifeless legalism of ecclesiasticism. The intellectual characteristic of this age of faith was its intimate knowledge of the divine mind. It explained the cosmogony of Heaven; it codified the Divine decrees. There was no part of the plans and purposes of God it did not profess to understand. Variance enough there was upon particular points, but no sect or party would admit that theology was other than an exact science. And if it did not presume to so complete a knowledge of the natural world, yet it turned to revelation as equally authoritative wherever the word of Scripture touched upon physical facts.

There was indeed another aspect to this Age of Faith, and it would be a capital error not to render homage to the lives and achievements which honored it and which have permanently enriched mankind. There were hair-splitting literalists in plenty who darkened counsel and fettered the free human spirit, who shut God away from man, and barred approach except through the complicated etiquette of a monarchical establishment and in the abject abasement of a court servitor. There were

perverted ascetics like St. Simeon Stylites, relentlessly destroying that which he was at such pains to preserve. But there were also men of tender piety and resourceful courage, heroic spirits like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Vincent de Paul, and the long succession of devoted missionaries who carried the cross and the Christian virtues into every dark corner of the earth.

But at last, in the fullness of time, mankind waked from this imagery of the charnel house, from prolonged contemplation of a lost world, as from a shuddering dream. All knowledge had been shut up in, and all progress barred by, the word of Scripture and the tradition of philosophy. The human spirit burst these barriers. After long wandering among the illimitable spaces of speculation the wearied mind of man came back to a face-to-face acquaintance with the next-to-hand world. The symbol of reality shifted from noumena to phenomena. Out of the facts of every-day life and observation, out of the remains of the past, there has been wrought out the story of a world whose richness, whose teeming life, whose problems and possibilities engage the eager pursuit, the high ambitions, the loyal service

of the noblest types of men. Reluctantly at first, but finally and unreservedly religion has come to share this new method and spirit and its view of the dignity and the nobility of human life. It is God's world, and not the devil's. The unnatural, exaggerated emphasis has been taken off the life beyond death. The richness, variety, and fascination of life in the world, and among the concerns of earth, has been reasserted and rediscovered. Trackless plains and inaccessible mountains have beckoned to the adventurous spirit and fanned to white heat the enthusiasm for knowledge and discovery. Laboratories and libraries have given absorbing zest to the quietest of lives. The beautiful in nature and in art has renewed its appeal to the esthetic side of life, exalting the imagination and purifying the emotions. Wholesome child life has had its renaissance. Education and industrial freedom have brought the possibilities of largeness and richness of life to every door. All this religion has accepted, is helping to bring about, and through it all is working toward moral betterment. Science and religion make common cause for the material, social, and moral progress of the

world. To the missionary the medicine-chest is as indispensable as the Bible. Problems of civic reform and of labor and capital are of vital concern not less to religion than to the State.

But the story is not all told. When the old sharp contrast between the two worlds had been destroyed, when something like the true emphasis had been restored to the life that now is, when at last religion would seem to be entering upon its undisputed inheritance, suddenly it is found, so far as a great body of trained and thoughtful workers is concerned, that the sense of reality regarding a God and Father and life beyond death is slipping away.

The conception of a life that goes on after all that we know of life has fled and turned to dust came at first only in dim and vague suggestion. All that could be grasped of it was shadowy and gloomy, a thing of dread and not desire. Christianity did not bring this thought into the world; but it was Christianity that lifted it out of its gloom and made it a glad certainty in the lives of unnumbered millions, that has taken the sting out of death and robbed the grave of its victory, that has enabled ordinary human clay—such as we

are—to face, not merely with courage, but joyously, weakness, failure, misunderstanding, misfortune, pain, and death, that has rescued old age from despair and crowned it with the halo of serene trust. Christianity exaggerated, dogmatic theology grossly libeled, a fair and beautiful world. The exaggeration has been corrected. The world has been redeemed to the uses and delights of man. Is this enough? Can this make up in the lives of men for the loss of that hope which has been of such inconceivable significance in the redemption and ennobling of human life? What has the religion of Jesus to say to this recession of the other world, to this agnostic stoicism within the limits of human knowledge? Was there anything in the message of Jesus which transcends these limits? Did Jesus carry our meagre knowledge to a higher degree of certainty? Did he know more of phenomena than we do? Was there some special communicating medium whereby the difficulties of comprehension and understanding which honestly and inextricably confuse the scientist and metaphysician were surmounted by him?

The men of earlier centuries talked learnedly of God's ways and thoughts. They

never doubted the possibility of knowing these things. They were in part revealed in Scripture, in part deduced by the faculties of the human mind, and reinforced from time to time by observed supernormal phenomena. The modern man of scientific training is not so sure of his knowledge. He knows some phenomena. He knows of some force. He knows of some succession of events which seems sometimes like intelligence and plan. He knows of certain surviving conventions which men distinguish as right and wrong. What does he know, what can he know, of any such being as a God must be? How can individual consciousness survive the dissolution of the brain, and if it may do so, how can he know it? By revelation and supernormal phenomena? But who accredits these? Much that God was formerly said to do is found to be the regular and ordinary succession of events. Much must be hazarded on the outcome of a difficult, perhaps insoluble, historical problem. Much that the man of ecstatic vision has felt as the direct moving of God upon the soul, a clearer psychology unhesitatingly pronounces to be subjective states of human consciousness brought about in various and diverse ways.

From the standpoint of one who is building up his knowledge, step by step, through all the senses and the logical powers which have been given him, is it inevitable or natural that he should postulate God as the explanation of any yet unassimilated facts? Does he need any such hypothesis? Is there any evidence, such as an inquiring mind may test, of a personal consciousness persisting beyond the grave? He may be willing to retain the term God as a convenient metaphor to sum up all of force and mystery there is in the universe: pantheism is perhaps more expressive than materialism. But he wants to be honest with himself and acknowledge how little he may predicate of this eternal and omnipresent, but unknowable, energy.

Is this a man of straw? Or have we touched upon the insistent attitude toward which, freed from theological shackles, the quiet thinking of those who deal with knowledge at first hand has seemed to be tending? Uncontroversial for the most part, veiled still in religious imagery, trying to hold on to Christian ethics while letting theology go, there is nothing yet to indicate what tremendous bearing the naked possession of this attitude of mind

must have upon the fortunes of mankind. Whatever its bearing, if true, so best, affirms the scientific spirit; though it also denies, with positive emphasis, that human life is thereby emptied of its nobility, its high endeavor, its incentive to moral excellence. Birth, growth, maturity, decay, death—the cycle of all that we know as existence. These are physical processes—inevitable, congenial, fulfilling. Growth and maturity are wide stretches. They comprehend the play of affection, the spur of ambition, the joy of comradeship, the exultant glow of achievement. Even over temporary unsuccess and failure Hope seldom fails to spread the purple glow of future achievement.

> "Has man no second life?—
> Pitch this one high!"

To this highest height of stoicism, to this mountain peak of conduct, courageous souls may climb, and in quietness, if without enthusiasm, meet the responsibilities of life, and face with calmness the inevitable end, sustained by the modest dream of joining

> "The choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence."

Stoicism sits lightly upon youth.

"'Something in the sense of the morning
Lifts the heart up to the sun.'
In our youth we may be pagan,
God is many, and the One
Great Supreme will wait till evening
When our little day is done:
Something in the sense of morning
Lifts the heart up to the sun!"

Stoicism is sublime in many of its aspects. It is courageous. It is better than many an opposing medley. But no such chill, though grand, conception has swept the keys of the human heart through the ages. Another thought has brought peace in the hour of sore assailment, another faith has given the tenderest types of the human spirit—the thought and the faith that death and decay are not of the spirit.

The message of Jesus was so simple, so transparent, so straightforward that it was at once and persistently misunderstood. Forever the attempt has been to garb it in the language of mystery. Caught up into the realm of metaphysical speculation, it seemed to the theological mind that Jesus had revealed God through logical processes and logical relations, and that his physical senses had apprehended another world and

the God who presides over it in a way not open to other men. Whatever be the fate of our supposed knowledge of spiritual realities, we may boldly affirm that it does not stand or fall by these criteria of the theologians. Jesus knew less of phenomena than you or I. He did not blaze any new way through metaphysical difficulties; he did not even concern himself with these difficulties. Jesus looked out upon human life as it went on about him in Galilee and Jerusalem. He saw the passion and the tragedy, the heights and depths, the possibilities. Behind it all, the explanation of all, he named God. The age-long ripening of Jewish thought had found its fruition in this conception. But he went beyond the contradictory notions through which his race had struggled and by which it was still beset. By that superlative spiritual insight which accredits itself, by that supreme intuition which is the birthright of the creative spirit, he pierced the mysteries of this omnipresent force, this cosmic order, and beheld the God and Father which upholds it and the Love which is its resolving, binding force. Jesus organized the realities of the life of the spirit. He saw relations, moral values. He inter-

preted the spiritual aspect of the world. The hopes, the aspirations, the longings, the better self—these were the instruments of the Divine unfolding, of that Divine nature which supremely expresses itself in Love. Through the loving heart, through the aspiring soul, through obedience to the highest, the Divine took hold of the human and lifted it into sonship.

Because Jesus spoke familiarly of God an obtuse theology imagined he had some occult knowledge we cannot possess. Because he had no doubt, now or anytime, here or anywhere, of the presence of the living God it was assumed that his assurance must be based on a technical knowledge of existence beyond the grave, that there had been revealed to him through supernormal processes a knowledge of that other world for which the sufficient testimony forever afterward is his recorded word.

Jesus was sure not because he could see through the tangle of metaphysics, not because he could solve the logical difficulties of the problem of knowledge, not because he could comprehend the mysteries of ganglion cells or peep over the rim of an inconceivably distinct

world. These were not the problems of his time; they did not trouble him at all; they were not present to his consciousness. Jesus was a Hebrew teacher. He was born, and he lived, in an atmosphere surcharged with the idea of God. He never doubted that God existed. Jesus had the sublime audacity, characteristic of his race, to believe that God could speak to men—directly, revealingly. And behind that audacity was the supremest spiritual insight the world has ever known. For him there was needed no unveiling of Flaming Bush, of Whirlwind Voice, of Pillar of Cloud. He did not require for his own unclouded vision that one had risen from the dead. For him was

> "Earth crammed with Heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God."

God the Father the explanation of the order and symmetry and eternal call to righteousness; Sonship the explanation of the aspirations, the hopes, the upward striving of men; Love the resolving, uniting force. Out into the world Jesus flung this conception. The mystery of life—all that lies beyond mediate and immediate perception, that which explains it, that which gives it meaning, that which expands

it—is God; not revealing himself as impersonal force, unknowable energy, but as our Father, touching the personal, the upward-striving, the divine in us. He did not pretend to any sibylline revelation. He gave no details of an existence beyond the grave which transcends finite experience and imagination. To him life was in the Father—abiding as the Father abode. He had sounded the depths of spiritual being, and so he spoke with the utmost confidence; but beyond this he was modest and not curious.

Jesus did not condemn the young ruler because he thought too much of this present world and not enough of the world to come. It was this present world that Jesus wanted to redeem. The tears to be quenched were here and now. The desert places to be made to bloom were desert places in the earth under our feet. The hope to be put into hopeless lives was for the men and women bent upon the common task of living. Jesus opened a way to transform human lives. He interpreted to the world a resolving force which should redeem human life, making it intelligent, free, strenuous, loving, unfolding, beautiful. Jesus saw the hardness and the cal-

culating selfishness in the life of the young ruler, who wanted eternal life only when this life had failed and ceased to be. Jesus offered him eternal life here and now—no affair of diplomatic adjustment between the individual and God, no paid-up policy in exchange for few or many pains or penances here, but a rebirth of the soul, an ennobled purpose, the ecstasy and the enthusiasm of self-forgetting service, the radiant vision of the pure in heart, the building up ever toward and into a life of eternal significance.

In spite of misunderstandings and failures, in spite of blindness, perversity, insincerity, weakness, we know that Jesus did not deceive the world. We know that human life has been and can be raised to that sonship which he proclaimed. We know that the peace of God shall crown him who orders his life after the pattern of Jesus Christ. We know that God can be known, and that the eternal bond of union with him can be manifest in a human life. "This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Yet the question must recur, "If a man

die shall he live again"—the same conscious personality that inhabited the earth? When life is at the full, with a song in the heart, how dim and far away and impersonal Death seems. But nearing the end, or overwhelmed by the swift, blinding stroke that carries beyond our ken the well-beloved, how the soul must try to pierce the veil. If the dead live again they have passed out of our sight: is there any breaking through the incommunicable medium of mortality?

Now it is the historical fact that here and there and at special times this medium has been broken through, that the God who is behind it all, and the dead who have passed through, have found a way to communicate in some direct, individual, and even verbal fashion—it is this asserted fact on which the faith of Christendom has been made largely, and at times almost wholly, to rest. For millions who have passed away and for other millions who are now alive this demonstration has quieted and satisfied the insistent questioning of the soul. And it may be said without hesitation that the negative criticism at this point, which brought such doubt and confusion into our modern world, and whose

effects are so evident in the widely prevalent stoicism everywhere about us, has spent its force. The inquiry now is, not how much modern science and modern criticism have destroyed, but how much they have saved—a fact which presages the dawn of a new constructive era in the history of religion. But this new constructive era will be conditioned, and largely shaped, by the positive results of modern science and modern criticism. It will not be content with those lower forms of evidence which satisfied the piety of the past. It will approach the mysteries alike of life and of death with becoming modesty, and, walled in by finite limitations, will confess often its bafflement. It will not be satisfied to rest its hope of eternal life on obscure historical incidents; nor upon those inner states which seem psychological rather than theological mysteries; nor upon that newer, persistent evidence of the supernormal which, even if all is granted that is claimed, is so meagre, incoherent, and unilluminative. Toward all these it will keep an open mind, and it will not believe that the last word has yet been spoken. But it will turn to the firmer ground of the immortal quality which may be and has been put into

the lives of men and women on the earth, to the inner witness of the pure heart and the unselfish life, to the life and the message of Jesus. To get and keep that sense of a God and Father which suffused the life of Jesus, is to win the immortal height. The sustaining note of this faith will be confidence in the spiritual integrity of Jesus; and it is through this conviction that men will reach up to the God who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." In the thought and the plan of Jesus death made no break. Believing in him life will be organized on his plan. Because he lives we shall live also. We shall not pretend to understand just what the last great change may mean; but more and more as words fail and images become meaningless we shall come to rest back upon the simple, tender symbolism of Jesus.

This eternal life which shall fill the soul! —the way to it is no new or strange way. By prayer and service, through the upward striving, one by one men shall win it—the pure heart, the clear vision, the joyful assurance.

"What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?
They are alive and well somewhere.
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.
All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier."

Out of the theological mind of the past has come down the feeling that when life is ebbing from the body the soul also is sick unto death. As with hurried feet the physician is summoned so also must the priest be brought to minister to the soul in its dire extremity. It will be well indeed, in that inevitable hour, if our friends may sit beside us in cheerful ministration. But at the end of a life well lived the soul is not sick. Whether Death come after long vigils, or in the market place, or in discharge of the humblest duty, the sincere man faces with fearless calm whatever is before him. If life is pitched high enough —as high as Jesus believed it could be— there will indeed be the sorrow of parting, but in the forward look Death will seem as sweet and unobtrusive as sleep to tired eyes.

"Love is and was my King and Lord
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

"And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well."

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